

**Whitehorse, Yukon****Monday, November 5, 2007 -- 1:00 p.m.**

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order. We will proceed at this time with prayers.

*Prayers*

**DAILY ROUTINE**

**Speaker:** We will proceed at this time with the Order Paper.

Tributes.

**TRIBUTES****In recognition of Diabetes Awareness Month**

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I rise in the House today to pay tribute to Diabetes Awareness Month. According to the World Health Organization, by 2025, over 300 million people worldwide will have diabetes. Although about 10 percent of people with diabetes have type 1 diabetes, the vast majority have type 2. In the Yukon, approximately 1,400 people have diabetes. According to the Canadian Diabetes Association, however, one in three people who have diabetes does not know it. On average, people have diabetes for seven years before it is diagnosed, and a lot of damage can take place during that time, needless to say, Mr. Speaker.

In the Yukon and, indeed, across northern Canada, First Nations and Inuit people are among the highest risk populations for developing diabetes. They are three to five times more likely than the general population to develop type 2 diabetes. The good news is that type 2 diabetes is directly linked to lifestyle habits. The factors that increase our risk of developing type 2 diabetes include age, obesity and lack of physical activity.

We can help delay or even prevent type 2 diabetes by losing excess weight, eating healthy foods, increasing our level of exercise, avoiding stress, and not smoking. That is why we spend time and money raising awareness about the risks of diabetes.

A more educated population stands a better chance of protecting itself against this disease that can rob people who have it of eyesight, feeling and even life itself.

In the Yukon, we have a strong diabetes collaborative that brings together doctors, pharmacists, community health providers and the Diabetes Education Centre, among other health professionals. This partnership has only one goal: helping people with diabetes live longer, healthier lives.

I urge all Yukoners to inform themselves about diabetes and, in particular, if they have any risk factors that can lead to diabetes, to get tested.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I rise today on behalf of the Official Opposition and the third party to pay tribute to Diabetes Awareness Month.

World Diabetes Day is celebrated each year on November 14, the birthday of a famous Canadian, Sir Frederick Banting,

who, along with Sir Charles Best, first discovered the idea that led to the discovery of insulin in 1921.

Diabetes is a disease that prevents one's body from properly controlling the level of sugar in the blood. Without enough insulin, or when one's body doesn't work well, someone with diabetes will end up with high blood sugar levels. Diabetics have to control their blood sugar since their bodies are having trouble doing this on their own.

Those living with diabetes face a daily struggle with diet restrictions or may need insulin injections in order to stay alive. Some of the many complications of diabetes are heart disease, kidney failure, nerve damage, blindness and all too frequently - amputations.

Young people have always been affected by type 1 or juvenile diabetes, but doctors and scientists are noticing that juvenile diabetes is increasing and particularly among our aboriginal youth. The incidence is increasing also from type 1 to type 2. First Nations people in the Yukon and across Canada are at a very high risk for diabetes. The rate of type 2 diabetes in First Nations people is three to five times that of the general Canadian population. Canada's future generations need to understand the impact of diabetes. Diabetes is having a serious impact on people who have it, the people close to them and on our health care system.

We need to get Canada's younger generation involved. This year the Canadian Diabetes Association is delivering the message, "Think diabetes can't affect you because you're young? Think again." Through proper blood control and education, a person with diabetes can improve their quality of life. Living a healthy lifestyle, including weight management, not smoking, eating healthily and active living are all tools to help prevent diabetes. An excellent program for prevention that started just yesterday and runs until November 28 here in Whitehorse is the CHIP program or Community Health Improvement Project, and it's not too late to sign up for this program to learn how to prevent and reverse disease with a knife and fork.

We can help prevent diabetes, but research is the only hope for a cure. We salute our doctors, health care professionals, front-line workers and volunteers for their dedication and service in addressing this most serious disease. They continue to work to prevent diabetes and improve the quality of life for those affected by this disease.

**In recognition of Adoption Awareness Month**

**Mr. Edzerza:** I rise on behalf of the Assembly to pay tribute to Adoption Awareness Month, which is in November. Adoption has always been a form of building families. Aboriginal people show a great compassion through custom adoption traditions. Childless families are given children who help adoptive parents in their future and who strengthen the whole community by establishing the family unit. In many traditional families children adopted by custom share celebrations and chores with their birth parents -- consolidating the community even further.

The idea of making adoptions secret and not revealing true birth heritage, sometimes forever, is one that our society used to impose. In the past, and in most cases, the adopted child was

born of unmarried parents. To protect the child from the stigma of illegitimacy and feelings of rejection, the birth parents were usually unknown, except to the agency facilitating the adoption. Today, thanks to great knowledge of genetic inheritance, the advancement in reproductive technology and more modern thinking, there is much greater access to information about a child's physical and cultural inheritance.

Much Canadian adoption legislation facilitates the disclosure of information back and forth between the parties -- especially health information. Some promote visits of the adopted child with birth parents and their extended family. In most cases, this is a positive development, but it is necessary to also have a process for registering vetoes, block disclosures and introductions in difficult cases.

Changes in the modern family structure have made for fewer adoptive children available. Single parenthood is no longer looked upon negatively. In some jurisdictions, the parent has special social and educational support. The result is that many single women keep their children rather than give them up for adoption. There are more adoptive parents waiting for a child. Single people are able to adopt in all jurisdictions and the legalizing of same-sex marriage has now made it possible for same-sex adoptions.

One of the results of having fewer adoptive children available is that the number of international adoptions is at an all-time high. International conventions regulate the intercountry adoption process to eliminate the buying and selling of children for adoption.

Despite wider opportunities for adopting, there are still thousands of Canadian children in need of permanent families. Many of these are older children or children with special needs. Adoption agencies and non-government organizations have recognized this need and many are implementing post-adoption programs that include financial, educational and social supports for adoptive parents of children who are affected by health or intellectual disabilities.

The Adoption Council of Canada is a national voice for adoption in Canada. It supports adoption awareness programs, including Canada's waiting child program, which contacts prospective adoptive parents. It advocates for post-placement services, acts as a liaison body for support groups and encourages progressive changes in legislation. It plans to soon have a computerized registration of waiting Canadian children and families.

In our modern society, we could learn a lot from the aboriginal custom adoption. It should be recognized as being as natural as caring for any child, and sometimes even more special.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are there any other tributes?

Introduction of visitors.

Returns or documents for tabling.

Reports of committees.

Petitions.

Are there any bills to be introduced?

Are there any notices of motion?

## NOTICES OF MOTION

**Mr. Nordick:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Government of Yukon

(1) to develop a public awareness campaign in conjunction with the RCMP to inform Yukoners, especially children and parents and educators, of best practices for safe use of the Internet, and of counselling and support available for victims of cybercrime;

(2) to strike an advisory committee of concerned stakeholders; and

(3) to work with the federal and other provincial and territorial governments to explore legislative and regulatory options to further protect children.

**Mr. Mitchell:** I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to invest now to build a diversified economy, one that will ensure responsible resource development while recognizing its cyclical nature and the need to promote other economic opportunities in existing and new sectors, new tourism initiatives, secondary manufacture with a value-added component for Yukon resources, knowledge-based industries, and arts and culture development that

(1) ensures the Government of Yukon remains debt-free;

(2) ensures a strong, diversified economy;

(3) recognizes the inherent and economic value of our natural environment;

(4) ensures development will not compromise the natural environment that sustains us and enhances our quality of life;

(5) ensures government has a role to play to foster developing industries; and

(6) supports the full participation in the economy by all Yukoners, including First Nations, communities and those excluded from enjoying the benefits of the recent national upswing in the economy.

**Mr. McRobb:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to uphold the principle of ensuring our roads and highways are safe for the travelling public by doing the work necessary during the summer months to enable our snow plowing equipment to be in service and ready for bad weather conditions by September 1 each year.

**Mr. Edzerza:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to act without delay to find temporary accommodations for clients of the children's receiving home in Whitehorse, and to replace the existing receiving home no later than 2008 with a safe, hospitable facility or facilities that will meet the needs of children who are in temporary care of the government, as well as the needs of the professional staff who provide such care.

And I give notice of the following motion:

THAT this House urges the Yukon government to recognize the urgent need for better mental health services for Yukon people and to take immediate action to provide suitable resources for

- (1) medical and residential care for children, youth and adults with mental disabilities or mental health problems;
- (2) incarcerated offenders;
- (3) clients of the Community Wellness Court;
- (4) medical detoxification, after-care treatment and social support for clients with alcohol and drug addictions;
- (5) full psychological assessments and referrals where needed throughout the territory; and
- (6) culturally appropriate land-based treatment programs.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following motion:

THAT the minimum wage for all workers in Yukon be raised immediately to \$10 per hour and indexed to the cost of living.

**Speaker:** Are there any further notices of motion?  
Hearing none, is there a statement by a minister?  
This then bring us to Question Period.

## QUESTION PERIOD

### Question re: Children's receiving home

**Mr. Fairclough:** I have some questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Last May, my colleague, the Leader of the Official Opposition, asked about problems with mould in the children's receiving home. A report done by the consulting company found mould in the building and also asbestos.

In July, the minister gave direction to look for temporary accommodations for children currently in the home. The direction was "ASAP". It is now November and the staff and children are still in the building. Why has no action been taken on this very serious health issue?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Of course, the member's reflections on this are not quite accurate. The member ought to be aware that in fact the Department of Health and Social Services has been working to identify alternative locations. Property Management Agency, of course, is actually the lead in identifying locations. That work is being done. We have informed the union and its representatives of the steps that are being taken in this area.

I also have to underline for the member opposite that the experts in these matters assure us that there is no risk to the staff or to the children right now from either mould or asbestos in the children's receiving home. The action is being taken to identify alternative locations to move them and give the government the ability to repair or replace the children's receiving home and ensure that these matters are fully resolved.

**Mr. Fairclough:** When problems like this arise with other governments, they act. For example, Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation tore down several houses and built new ones and renovated many others when black mould was found. What has the minister done? Three months have gone by and

the staff and the children are still there. It is not a priority for this minister.

The union representing workers is not happy with the lack of response. This is what the president had to say, "The minister has to stop the smoke and mirrors. Yukon children and workers are at risk. Relocate the children and the staff and build an appropriate facility now." That's what he had to say. Why has the minister failed to act in the best interests of staff and children who have to live in this building every day?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It appears that the member did not listen to my first response, since he did not adjust his script to reflect that fact. Again, I have to emphasize to the member opposite that, in fact, the Department of Health and Social Services and officials within the Property Management Agency are working on this. Since it is a matter related to space, we are required to work through PMA in this area and we are working on identifying alternative locations.

What the member should note, in the interest of engaging in constructive debate, is the fact that the greatest challenge with this lies in identifying a building where the children can be moved while repair or replacement to the children's receiving home occurs. There are not buildings sitting vacant and constructed simply waiting to be moved into. Steps have to be taken to identify an alternative location and to move whomever or whatever housed in that location to another location. It is a challenge, and it requires steps to be taken. It involves a number of buildings and that work is being done by the experts in this area.

Unlike the member opposite, I rely on the experts in these matters. I rely on the staff of PMA and in my department to do the good work that they are doing in this area. I rely on the experts, who assure us that there is no risk to health, as long as these areas are not disturbed in the home. That's what we're doing and it will be concluded.

**Mr. Fairclough:** The minister made a promise and he broke it. That's not good enough. Perhaps the responsibility for this building should be taken away from the minister, just like the rural ambulance problem. He couldn't handle that hot potato and he couldn't handle this one either.

Another building the minister is responsible for also has a mould problem. This is the Thomson Centre. Under this minister's watch, it has been closed for several years. In August of last year, the minister announced that this building would soon be open. The minister said the facility is targeted to reopen six months from now, according to the government's news release.

A year later, the minister has still not lived up to that promise. When is the minister going to get rid of the mould problem and when will the Thomson Centre be reopened?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** The approach the member is taking is not constructive and he ought to be aware of this. Unlike the Member for Kluane and him, we don't get out and fix the bolts on speed plows. We do not get out with our hammer and do the work. We hire the contractors. We work with the experts in these areas.

With regard to the Thomson Centre, the member --

**Some Hon. Member:** (Inaudible)

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the floor -- if members are interested in hearing the answer. In the case of the Thomson Centre, mould was discovered after we had identified the expected timeline for opening. Steps have been taken. Again, we engaged experts -- Theodore Sterling Associates -- as well as worked with the Property Management Agency in identifying and ensuring that the steps have been taken to address those problems.

I can inform members that, in fact, a plan will be presented for Cabinet consideration in the very near future. Once Cabinet has made its determination, I look forward to announcing the next steps for the Thomson Centre.

**Question re: F.H. Collins Secondary School wheelchair lift**

**Mr. Mitchell:** I have a question for the Minister of Education. I find it hard to believe that this government could develop an educational program that is meant to integrate students with disabilities into the public school system and then literally leave these students out in the cold because of a malfunctioning wheelchair lift. Replacing the wheelchair lift at F.H. Collins Secondary School is not a difficult financial issue. There is \$100 million in the bank. The problem is this government's priorities. The government spends millions of dollars on studies that are ignored, but can't fix a \$25,000 mechanical problem that affects real people in a government building every day.

Why has this broken wheelchair lift not been repaired?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I appreciate the Leader of the Official Opposition bringing this issue forward. It's an important one, not only for people with disabilities, but indeed for all Yukoners. It's true. This government did work to move a group of high school-age students, to integrate them into F.H. Collins. I'm very proud of that and I think it was a good move to make. Unfortunately, we had a mechanical lift that broke. I'm not an engineer, but mechanical things do break. I'd like to let the member opposite -- and indeed all Yukoners -- know that a replacement lift has been ordered and will be installed as soon as possible.

**Mr. Mitchell:** That's good news, but why did this have to reach the point where students were being challenged in terms of their dignity and having to be carried up the stairs before this minister acted? There was no excuse for expecting staff to rearrange their programs within the school because of mechanical problems. In fact, there was no excuse for spending time and money looking at alternatives and workarounds to accommodate those who are most affected by the mechanical problems. This is a government facility and it has a mechanical problem that needs to be dealt with. Now the minister indicates that a new lift has been ordered. Can he tell us when this problem will in fact be fixed?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I'm proud of the teachers at F.H. Collins and their ability and willingness to rearrange programs to recognize that, yes, mechanical things do break down and that we will come up with a school-based solution to fix it.

If it had simply been a matter of changing a part out or putting in another simple solution, that would have been done; unfortunately that wasn't the case. A new lift has been ordered

and, when it is here and able to be installed, we'll do it. Until then, I applaud the teachers at F.H. Collins for their ability to work with their students and provide them with access to the music room, the gymnasium, the library and the cafeteria, and to live up to the idea of implementing and integrating that class into the school.

They've done a great job; unfortunately we had a wheelchair lift that broke.

**Mr. Mitchell:** We still haven't actually heard an answer to the question of when. It's similar to the Minister of Health and Social Services, who tells us that the Thomson Centre will be reopened in six months, 12 months -- that when it's open, it will be open.

When this first occurred, Education officials were told to wait for the next budget cycle. Officials wanted it fixed; the minister said no. The money to fix this problem could and should have been allocated in the supplementary budget as soon as the problem was identified.

Education officials have stated the facilities are updated on an as-needed basis. Well, this government is hereby notified that fixing or replacing the wheelchair lift at F.H. Collins is needed immediately and it's needed now.

As the saying goes, Mr. Speaker, the elevator doesn't go all the way to the top. Is this notification sufficient for the minister to act promptly?

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I appreciate the member opposite's passion for this issue. The part has been ordered and a replacement product will be installed when it's here.

I would caution the member opposite that he shouldn't put words into my mouth, especially when those words don't reflect the facts. I would caution him and appreciate in the future if he didn't attribute comments to me that I didn't make in the first place.

The wheelchair lift unfortunately broke; a new one has been ordered. I applaud the school for making school-based solutions to address the situation and I'm glad to see that the students there have access to the library, the music room, the cafeteria and the gymnasium. They've done a heck of a job accommodating this unfortunate incident.

**Question re: Children's receiving home**

**Mr. Cardiff:** Mr. Speaker, on Friday, along with my colleague from McIntyre-Takhini, I had the opportunity to tour the children's receiving home on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Whitehorse. I'd like to thank the minister for helping arrange that tour and also thank the officials from his department, who were very helpful to us. It's too bad the minister didn't come along on the tour, actually.

Mr. Speaker, what we saw on Friday confirmed what we have heard for months about the condition in the receiving home. A professional investigation into the mould problem in the building was completed in early June, and yet nothing has been done on the consultant's recommendations. Why is the minister allowing both staff and clients to stay in the building that is clearly unsuitable for the purpose that it is serving?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member for Mount Lorne acknowledging the fact that we have been open in this area, that when the request came from the

third party to tour the receiving home we were happy to facilitate that request and happy to have the Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services accompany them on that tour. The member should be well aware that from the very beginning of the mould being discovered in the children's receiving home and the discovery of asbestos that the appropriate action has indeed been taken. We've been frank in informing the public, the union and the members opposite of the steps that are being taken and the challenges we're facing. Of course, the most significant challenge in this area is identifying alternative locations for housing these children in a safe, appropriate setting while steps are taken to repair or replace the children's receiving home. I have to reiterate to the member, as I mentioned to the previous questioner, that we've been informed by the experts that there is no health risk to staff or to children from mould or asbestos as long as action is not taken that will disturb them, which, of course, remediation and repair would do.

**Mr. Cardiff:** The consultants made 10 recommendations about fixing the mould situation, as well as the aftermath of a previous fire and the possible presence of asbestos in the building. But the problems go far beyond these issues.

The building layout is another serious problem. On the day that we visited, there were 14 children in residence -- with four distinct living areas on three different floors. Now, the hallways are narrow, and there are several blind corners and stairways. The best description of it is a rabbit warren. Staff members have expressed serious concerns about getting children out safely in the case of an emergency.

Why has the minister done nothing to replace this building, even though the department has known for many years about the many problems that exist there?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** First, I have to encourage the member opposite to be a little less inflammatory and a little more accurate in his remarks. To characterize this building as a rabbit warren is offensive to those who live and work in it. We recognize the deficiencies of the building, steps are being taken to provide alternative accommodation and, of course, further steps will be taken in the area of group homes to provide facilities that give us the ability to ultimately provide housing for that number of children in two homes, given the ability to provide more -- what's the word? -- direct and appropriate programming for those children, as has been recommended to us. Those steps are being taken.

Again, I have to remind the member that steps are being taken to identify alternative locations to move the children into while repair or replacement of the children's receiving home occurs.

**Mr. Cardiff:** The government has no excuse for not acting. It has plenty of money and the need is obvious. Both the staff and the clients deserve better.

Previous reports -- the Anglin report, I believe -- have called for the receiving home to be replaced with smaller therapeutic group homes -- one for boys and one for girls. We understand that the department has now found a building to serve as a temporary youth emergency shelter, so maybe it can turn its attention to fast-tracking a solution for the receiving home problem.

Perhaps the former dementia unit at the Thomson Centre could be used temporarily while the department finds or builds a replacement building. I understand there are not mould issues at that end of the Thomson Centre and that it would be appropriate.

Will the minister direct his officials to act immediately to find a properly zoned alternative location or else tear down the existing building and use the site for a suitable replacement?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** From the member's question, it's clear that he understands some of the issues related to this -- if not all. It would be helpful if his questions reflected that fact a little more closely.

The issue that the member has raised is about the challenges with zoning. Absolutely, that is a challenge we face. The challenge of a building is, of course -- it has made it take time to identify alternative locations in this area. There are certainly not empty buildings that are suitable, constructed, and ready and waiting for children to move in. If so, we would have a new group home.

The challenge is in identifying suitable locations that can be addressed. I appreciate the member's suggestion regarding the Thomson Centre, but again, as I said earlier to the member opposite, the work has been done on the Thomson Centre and will be presented to Cabinet for a decision once that decision has been made. I look forward to announcing what will occur with the Thomson Centre.

As the members know, many of these projects, such as the Thomson Centre, were constructed under previous governments. In the case of the Thomson Centre and through the actions of the NDP in choosing not to build it up to code and, in fact, running the building inspector off, we have seen the problems develop in terms of mould.

#### **Question re: Mary Lake group home**

**Mr. Cardiff:** I now have a constituency question regarding an incident in Mary Lake about a week ago, and it involves a 15-year-old boy who is a resident of the Mary Lake group home. A constituent of mine, who lives near the group home, discovered this boy hiding in the bushes on her property. It was below zero and this young lad was very cold -- his lips were blue. The boy said he had been in a group home for a month and that he hadn't attended school in that time and that he was afraid to go back to the group home because he was being mistreated. I'm wondering, is the minister aware of this situation and, if so, what would his department recommend that a neighbour do under such circumstances?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** No, I'm not aware of the incident as the member has reflected. I am aware that, periodically, there are challenges with children running away from group homes. As to the member's assertion, I would be interested in hearing more details. His claims are very serious to suggest that children are being mistreated at one of our facilities. While that is an accusation or concern we would take very seriously and take the appropriate investigative steps if a complaint were filed of such, that is a very serious assertion and I would urge the member not to toss it around casually. If he does have information in this regard, we would happily take it and treat it appropriately through the appropriate review processes.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I hope the minister takes this seriously. These are the words that were used when I was notified about the incident this weekend. The neighbour offered the boy her telephone to call his parents or social worker and he was afraid to do that. My constituent offered to call the RCMP -- he was reluctant to do that. Finally, on my constituent's recommendation, the boy eventually did call 9-1-1. Apparently, he was advised by someone to walk back over to the group home. I'm appalled, because there was no follow-up to the 9-1-1 call by the RCMP, the group home or by social workers.

Does it concern the minister that this boy's expressed fear of parents, social workers and his reluctance to go back to the group home was not followed up on after a 9-1-1 call?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I would appreciate it if the member could identify the claims that were made including the location of them and details about the incident -- perhaps in a letter to me or have the individual who raised these concerns with him sit down with officials. Again, I have to express to the member that we take such accusations very seriously; however, we do not simply accept them without any evidence presented in this area. These matters are properly treated in a very sincere and considered fashion through an appropriate investigative process. I cannot respond to the member's claims on the floor of the Legislature, but I want to assure him I do take those assertions very seriously. If he would provide the detail, then it will be dealt with appropriately within the department. Those concerns will be reviewed, and the member's version of events taken seriously, but appropriately through the appropriate investigative procedures.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Well, fortunately my constituent was concerned enough and she walked the young fellow back over to the group home. Who knows what might have happened to this young lad if she hadn't been that concerned and she had just left him to his own devices. When they got to the group home, the worker told my constituent that they had known that this young fellow was missing, but we don't know how long he'd been out there, or what steps were being taken to try to locate this young fellow who was hiding. Would the minister please undertake to find out why there was so little response to this boy's plight by 9-1-1, by the RCMP, by the group home, or by the social worker? Will he also look into what is being done to address this young fellow's fears about living in the group home?

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, again, further to my previous responses to the members, I would urge him to talk to his constituents who brought these claims forward and inform them that we need them to make a formal complaint in this matter. We would look into this matter if the complaint is presented formally. It is a very serious matter if such claims are made. However, claims like this -- I would certainly hope these claims are not being made lightly, because it is a very serious accusation. If, indeed, there is any cause in these areas, we will respond to a formal complaint through the appropriate substantive processes and look into the claims outlined in that formal complaint.

#### **Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre rebuild**

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Mr. Speaker, this government has talked for years about building a new correctional facility. In fact, this government has talked about creating the best correctional system in Canada. The years have gone by, and we have seen some \$3 million in the budget for the design of the new correctional centre. No tenders, no contracts, no designs, lots of talk and no action. When will the minister get on with the business of designing the new facility?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Building a new correctional facility is identified in our correctional redevelopment strategic plan and a major initiative currently underway. In April 2007, the building advisory committee made a recommendation to the Government of Yukon to proceed with the development of the fourth conceptual planning action. We acted on that recommendation, and the planning of a new correctional centre has advanced to the facility functional program phase. In this phase, we continue to work with First Nations, staff, inmates, and non-government organizations to inform the process. Schematic design will begin this month.

**Mr. Inverarity:** The government has spent almost \$1.5 million over the past few years on upkeep for the existing facility. This government has also spent \$2.5 million for consultation on corrections that said, "Build a new jail."

The Yukon government's most recent tendering forecast includes a project worth \$500,000 on interim space management renovations at the Whitehorse Correctional Centre.

When will this end? When will this government stop throwing millions of dollars of taxpayers' money to prop up a condemned facility? When are they actually going to start to build a new one?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, déjà vu. We were criticized for not consulting, and now we are over-consulting. The Department of Justice continues to demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the Whitehorse Correctional Centre is safe and meets the needs of staff and inmates.

While work is underway to develop a new correctional centre, the department continues with initiatives to manage the current facility through the interim space management plan. We envision this work beginning in the next couple of months, with completion anticipated during this fiscal year.

**Mr. Inverarity:** We started to build a new jail in 2000. All I want to know is: what's the date? When are you going to start it? Let's see some action.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** As we publicly announced, the building will be complete in December 2011.

#### **Question re: Whitehorse Correctional Centre statistics**

**Mr. Inverarity:** I would like to address another question to the Minister of Justice, if I may.

In reviewing some recent statistics on the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, covering a period from 1994 to 2005, I have noticed that the number of days being served by inmates who have been sentenced is steadily decreasing over the 10-year period. In fact, they are down approximately 31 percent. I

would take this as a positive indicator but I doubt if crime was actually decreasing in that period. We will see.

My question for the minister, though, is: to what does she attribute this decrease in the number of inmates who are residing in our facility?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** What I would attribute this to -- our increase in the last little while -- is the effectiveness of SCAN.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I have also discovered that there is a very clearly defined pattern in the number of inmates who are being held in remand. In 1994, there were 5,327 days served in remand. In 2005, that number had dramatically jumped to 9,640 days. That's an increase of almost 80 percent.

Can the minister explain why the time served by those sentences dropped 31 percent, while the time served by those in remand has gone up by 80 percent?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** The remand depends on the sentencing by the judge. This minister has no effect on the sentencing that the judges do -- or no hand in that.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, currently the time being served by those sentenced and those in remand is essentially the same. We have as many non-sentenced inmates serving time in jail as we do inmates who have been sentenced. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed a very disturbing trend. People in remand are perceived to be innocent until they are found otherwise, yet we have an 80-percent increase in that number, and this should not go unaddressed. If this trend continues -- and there is nothing to believe that it isn't going to change -- we will soon have more inmates in remand than we do actually serving time. What does the minister propose to do about this?

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Mr. Speaker, as I said previously here, the judges do the sentencing. This department has no effect, nor do we want to have any influence on the judges' decisions. The member well knows that.

**Speaker:** The time for Question Period has now elapsed. We will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### Bill No. 7: Second Reading -- adjourned debate

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 7, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Taylor; adjourned debate, the Hon. Ms. Horne.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** As I was outlining in my comments previously, this budget is part of a larger package that reflects our clear vision for a bright future for the Yukon. In preparing for this discussion, I was reminded of the importance of the second reading of a bill as it is the most important stage through which the bill is required to pass, for its whole principle is then at issue and is affirmed or denied by a vote in the House. Thus, Mr. Speaker, I think it vital that we think about and discuss the vision, the principles that stand behind this budget.

When I imagine tomorrow I see a place where offenders get the help they need in a facility that designed with pro-

gramming and treatment in mind. During our first mandate, we conducted meaningful consultation that resulted in the substance abuse action plan and the correctional redevelopment strategic plan.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing this mandate is a result of that consultation. The Yukon requires a modern correctional centre that will allow correction professionals to carry out their responsibilities in a positive environment that will support the provision of programs to the offenders.

This government realizes the importance that the centre will play, in ensuring safety and security for all Yukoners. This government was not content to build a warehouse. We were not content to build a facility that was proposed by the Liberal government. As we discussed, when I took the opposition critics on a tour of the Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the way we do corrections needs to change. That is why this government undertook an extensive consultation on corrections, because we know that the building is only part of the story. To make meaningful change in offenders' lives and provide security for Yukoners, we need to change the correctional system as a whole.

Our government's philosophy on correctional reform is summed up best in the correctional redevelopment strategic plan. In order to achieve a vision of becoming the best correctional system in Canada, the Department of Justice is committed to working collaboratively with First Nations and other service providers to achieve the following goals: (1) to substantially improve the quality of correctional programs offered to victims, offenders and the community members; and (2) to fundamentally change the operation of the correctional system so that the Department of Justice, First Nations and other service providers are better positioned to participate in the delivery of high-quality correctional programs.

We are aware of the central role that the new correctional centre will play in delivering high-quality correctional programming. Yukon has accepted the recommendation of the building advisory committee on a decision option for a new correctional centre. The new correctional facility will allow for flexible programming, separate remand facilities and will promote a healing environment that reflects Yukon First Nation culture and values.

The new correctional centre will be a modern, secure facility that provides security but also offers offenders real opportunities to heal and take responsibilities for their actions. This option allows us to design a facility where staff work directly with the offenders and will facilitate the delivery of high-quality correctional programs.

Part of the work in the area of changing the way we do corrections involves developing a new *Corrections Act*. As I previously announced, this government is committing \$115,000, subject to legislative approval, toward rewriting the Yukon *Corrections Act*. The money will be used for consultations with stakeholders that are required to ensure the outdated act is modernized to reflect current priorities for Yukon and is more in line with territorial and provincial corrections legislations across Canada. The *Corrections Act* action plan contains a recommendation that the act be replaced and be included in the department's correctional redevelopment strategic plan. The act

will also reflect the principles of the corrections action plan, which was completed in 2006, and will enable the government to manage and deliver programs and services based on those principles. The act will be modernized to reflect the important role that First Nations will have in steering corrections now and in the future. The impact of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as developments in the field of corrections -- changes must be made to support a client-focused correctional system that aims to promote healing, accountability and offenders taking responsibility.

We are already taking steps to move forward in this area. Along with Canada, we have launched the Community Wellness Court. Yukon and Canada committed \$609,000 toward the establishment of this innovative initiative under the Yukon substance abuse action plan.

Establishing the Community Wellness Court is part of the Yukon government's commitment to integrate a therapeutic problem-solving court into the Yukon justice system. Offenders with challenges such as addictions, FASD, or mental health problems will now be able to work with the court to address their treatment needs.

Offenders who are willing to participate may be eligible for a comprehensive treatment plan that includes court-supervised substance abuse treatment, random drug testing --

**Some Hon. Member:** Point of order.

#### Point of order

**Speaker:** Order please. Member for Porter Creek South, on a point of order.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Mr. Speaker, just in speaking to the supplementary estimates, I am wondering what the new vision for the correctional facility has to do with the old-year supplementary.

#### Speaker's ruling

**Speaker:** I wouldn't consider that a point of order. Sit down.

You have the floor, Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I have forgotten where I was, with that interruption.

#### Speaker's statement

**Speaker:** Order please. Sit down. A member can call a point of order at any given time during the day. It's up to the Chair to determine whether it's a point of order or not. It's not considered an interruption; it is simply a point of order.

You have the floor, Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Offenders who are willing to participate may be eligible for a comprehensive treatment plan that includes court-supervised substance abuse treatment, random drug testing, incentives and sanctions, clinical case management and social services support.

We are committed to helping those who wish to participate in improving their lives. The Community Wellness Court will evolve and adapt over time through regular community input

from local non-government organizations, First Nations and service providers.

Our focus is on bringing health, hope and healing. To bring about healing, we have to deal with offenders, victims and their communities. Along with our partner, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Yukon hosted a two-day conference to explore and learn more about healing in corrections as a way of providing correctional services. This conference is part of ongoing efforts to continue to work with others while implementing the correctional redevelopment strategic plan released earlier this year.

During our consultation on corrections, Yukoners said that the correctional system must be based on healing and taking the time to participate and hear about the work being done in other jurisdictions.

We have a clear vision for a bright future. Having outlined our vision, I commend this budget to the House. I would be pleased to speak to it in detail in Committee of the Whole.

Gunilshish. Thank you. Merci.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I'm not going to talk long on this particular supplementary estimate that's before us, but I would like to just briefly bring up an issue that I think might have some bearing on it. It has to do with trademarks and copyrights.

I've noticed in the House that we're coming up to Remembrance Day. As you can see, I'm wearing a poppy from the Royal Canadian Legion, and I've noticed that this is a trademark of the Royal Canadian Legion. There are members in the House who have actually changed this trademark, and I think it's very important to highlight that this actually goes against the trademark laws and regulations that we have in Canada. I would encourage those members in the House that have made changes to their poppy that it might perhaps be considered disrespectful to the Royal Canadian Legion and that they should go back to what the emblem actually represents.

As for the supplementary, there's not much I can say. I think it's time to move on and vote on it.

Thank you.

**Mr. Nordick:** I am pleased to rise today to speak at second reading of the *Fourth Appropriation Act, 2006-07*, for the fiscal year of 2006-07. I'd like to take a bit of time to outline some of what the Yukon Party government has been able to accomplish and achieve over the last number of years, but more specifically with respect to the last fiscal year.

On October 10, 2006, Yukoners voted for political stability. They wanted to "stay the course", and I would like to, once again, thank the people of the Klondike for electing me. While voting for me and this government, they voted for continuity.

Speaking of continuity, in the 2006-07 fiscal year, we launched the Yukon government's health human resources strategy. This strategy is funded through the territorial health access fund, for which we received over \$21 million from the federal government over a five-year period. This is the result of a successful pan-northern approach utilized by our Premier and the premiers of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.



This approach led to the historic recognition of the inadequacy of per capita funding for addressing the needs of the north, with our sparse populations and large areas of jurisdiction. The health human resources strategy was funded by the territorial access fund. The strategy is aimed at improving Yukoners' access to primary care.

We also provided funding and significantly invested in Yukon students to attend medical school and nursing school, and receive training in a variety of health professions.

The government helped improve the quality of life for all Yukoners during the Canada Winter Games as a wonderful couple of weeks in the lives of Yukoners and the lives of many Canadian athletes. In 2007, the Canada Winter Games was a complete and resounding success, thanks in part to the hundreds of volunteers community-wide, throughout the Government of Yukon and the City of Whitehorse.

The Canada Winter Games left a lasting legacy and provided a state-of-the-art facility for future sport venues. The volunteers need to be thanked again. Many of our volunteers participated in this event on the sport side and the cultural side of the games.

Along with a pan-northern approach to health care, we partnered in a national marketing campaign that was launched prior to the Canada Winter Games. This is another example of how a collaborative and pan-northern approach to governance works. I'd like to once again thank our Premier for the good work and the other premiers of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Our very first national marketing campaign was able to reach thousands of Canadians country-wide, and it built upon qualities that make us all proud to call the north and the Yukon our home. It was an investment of over \$5 million, of which the Government of Yukon contributed \$2 million and her sister territories -- \$1.5 million respectively. The national Look Up North marketing campaign was a definite success.

The supplementary budget that closes out our fiscal year has significant resources allocated toward the development of a corrections action plan. One area our corrections plan differs from the Liberals' plan is that we believe in a very holistic approach to corrections and to work collaboratively in partnership with Yukon First Nations on taking a very creative approach to it. It is certainly not a process just to design a new jail; it is a process to define how we can actually better deliver the services and programs within a facility that are responsive and culturally relevant to the Yukon.

This approach was used to address substance abuse, which is a major factor in contributing to the level of crime in our communities, the Yukon and Canada. We work with Yukon First Nations to develop a comprehensive corrections action plan. The Department of Justice has completed a 15-month, territory-wide consultation on how to better meet the needs of offenders, victims and communities through the corrections plan. The correctional redevelopment strategic plan is an implementation framework that was approved by First Nation chiefs and the Government of Yukon at the Yukon Forum in November 2006.

Some other ways our government is improving and contributing to the better way of life for all Yukoners is with arts funding. Arts funding supports community cultural projects or the Yukon arts funding program which is building capacity in our arts and cultural community through direct financial support to arts organizations. Dawson City Arts Society is one example of one of the organizations that received funding through that program. The Yukon provides the highest level of funding in the support of arts. We spend an average of \$113 per person in support of arts, so that does speak volumes about the level of commitment by this government.

In 2006, the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society received \$10,000 toward their own strategic planning initiative. MacBride Museum received \$26,000 toward specializing building upgrades and a further \$73,000 for inventory and cataloguing its collection.

We are also very proud to be able to provide a total of \$729,000 toward the expansion of the MacBride Museum.

We were able to garner \$40 million in northern strategy funding through the Yukon Forum. In 2005, an agreement was reached on a \$27-million northern economic development fund. The Yukon Forum worked together in a couple of major joint initiatives: the *Children's Act* review, the corrections consultation and the education reform. These are examples of collaboration.

Mr. Speaker, we are improving the life of Yukoners, and I will speak to a few of the many examples. The Yukon government increased the purse for the Yukon Quest by \$50,000 per year for two years. The funding of the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race increases participation and raises the profile of the race. The Quest does celebrate its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008. In addition to the new funding for the race purse, the Department of Tourism and Culture provides the Yukon Quest with \$150,000 annually toward the marketing and promotion of the event.

Mr. Speaker, we also provide funding to many projects within the communities through the community development fund. In April of 2006, the Government of Yukon through the community development fund announced \$1.16 million to 13 major projects in seven communities, one of these being the Dawson City Firefighters Association, which received up to \$150,000 to install a fire training facility that will provide emergency responders the opportunity to learn the skills necessary on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, community development funds were awarded in 2006 to 12 projects in seven communities that amounted to \$157,345. One example of this was \$13,400 to the Klondike Gold Panning Association for the special gold panning troughs for the 2007 World Gold Panning Championships. Another example is the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society receiving \$19,000 to refurbish and upgrade the natural history displays.

The Tr'ondek Hwech'in received \$18,500 to host a four-day cultural and education celebration.

Mr. Speaker, this government assisted Yukon College in a pension shortfall by providing Yukon College with \$1,251,600 per year for five years beginning in 2006-07. This government

also increased funding for preservation of historic properties. One example is the Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation receiving \$11,800 to landscape two cemeteries at Moosehide and stabilize historic grave fences and markers. Another example of cooperation with Tr'ondek Hwech'in is the signing of the Forty Mile Management Plan. Tr'ondek Hwech'in and the Government of Yukon official signed the Forty Mile, Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine Historic Site Management Plan in a special ceremony at the Forty Mile site. For several years, the Yukon government's Department of Tourism and Culture and Tr'ondek Hwech'in have been working together to carry out archeological investigations, building stabilization, site maintenance and interpretation at that site.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would like to congratulate one of my constituents, Brenda Caley, for she received the Commissioner's award from Commissioner Van Bibber -- for long service award to her commitment to the history of the Yukon. Brenda Caley has lived in Dawson City since she arrived as a teacher in the early 1960s. Her many years of dedicated volunteer service in Dawson City, including her 35 years with the Klondike Visitors Association -- I would also like to thank her for all the work she has done to make Dawson City and the Yukon a better place to live.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to extend my appreciation to the Acting Finance Minister for her presentation of this budget document. Clearly, the opposition places very little emphasis on a year-end closeout; however, I'm pleased that our side, the government side, does place a great deal of emphasis on the financial management of the territory. This document is a demonstration of the last 12 months of fiscal management that this government has provided the territory.

True to form, the Official Opposition has missed a number of the salient points in this document, though I do concur that it is a bookkeeping necessity, as required.

In closing out our fiscal year of 2006-07, what are those salient points I speak of? First off, again it demonstrates an ever-increasing fiscal position of the Yukon. That is a good thing because it is allowing this territory to have more options to ensure that it doesn't mortgage the future by maintaining a healthy net financial resource position and it allows us to work in many areas where, in the past, we simply couldn't because we did not have the fiscal capacity.

What are the other points that are critical to this? This document demonstrates another fiscal year-end for the Yukon Territory where there is an annual surplus, an unqualified audit and a very healthy net financial position.

Now I have to go back in history just a ways, but it's an important issue. Let's go back five years to 2002 when a Yukon Party government was elected to office. Our commitment at that time was to provide strong fiscal management for Yukon. When we came into office, we were under a Liberal government watch with Liberal government fiscal management and budgeting. What did that produce? It produced a budget of some \$400 million to \$500 million being expended in the Yukon in areas that simply were not providing benefit for Yukon citizens or a quality of life that Yukon citizens were

demanding at the time. The incumbent government was voted out of office.

It also demonstrated something else: a lack of cash management approach to the finances of the territory. The result of that was an empty cupboard. The Yukon at that time was in a situation where we, the Yukon Territory, were experiencing overdraft charges for the need to pay wages and make sure other programs and services were being maintained because there simply wasn't the cash in the bank available.

That is no longer the case and this document represents that fact. If we fast-forward over those five years, in 2002, under a Liberal government fiscal management watch, there was a qualified audit. There was a very poor financial position and there was a situation where limited resources were available.

Today the Yukon is expending some \$800 million to \$900 million and, over those five years, we've had five successive unqualified audits; we've had five successive healthy net financial positions, with very healthy surpluses.

I make these points because there's more to this document than housekeeping. This document demonstrates to Yukoners that, once again, a fiscal year has wrapped up, concluded and, once again, their government has provided sound fiscal management, applying cash management principles, investing in Yukon's infrastructure, investing in our social safety net, investing in health care, investing in our economic development and our economic future, investing in a better quality of life for Yukoners -- that's what this document demonstrates again.

We're very pleased that, once the Auditor General did her work and we could do the final bookkeeping entries, we have again in Yukon a very healthy financial position and a very bright fiscal future with which we can do much more in this territory than we were able to do in the past.

I look forward to the coming debate on our other supplementary budget for 2007-08 because I'm sure the Official Opposition and the third party will have great criticism and great difficulty in demonstrating, through that criticism, why they're so disconnected from what's really happening in the Yukon today, why there is such a better quality of life, why there is such a low unemployment rate, why there is such a healthy net financial position, why we are getting unqualified audits, why we are demonstrating and providing Yukoners at each year-end such a significant surplus of their finances.

The one thing this government will not do is the knee-jerk reactions of governments of the past in expending needlessly the resources available to Yukon today and mortgaging Yukon's future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McRobb:** I'll try to be a little more succinct in my commentary on the supplementary budget. After all, this bill is essentially a bookkeeping measure to provide \$82,000 more to one of the line departments, being Community Services. I'll have to apologize, but I didn't hear exactly what the \$82,000 was for, even though we've heard hours and hours of speeches by the government members opposite. It just seems that this opportunity to speak for 20 minutes by most members and

unlimited time by the Acting Minister of Finance who introduced the bill was used pretty well to the extreme.

I'm a little concerned about the use of the time of this House because, if you add it up, it probably comes to about one hour for \$10,000 or \$15,000. If you compare that to the rate of discussion per dollar in the spring budget, it's probably about 100 times more. Therefore, there is a question about the appropriate use of the House's time in spending so much time to talk about a very minor supplementary budget that's essentially a housekeeping bill. We even heard a bit of a tribute to a constituent built into a previous speech.

Mr. Speaker, I would simply point out that the supplementary speeches should be relevant to the bill itself. We hear the government side members use this as an opportunity to berate the opposition and expound on the virtues of the government itself. Again, it's a very questionable exercise.

We should try to stick to the public's business because that's what we're here to do. I have to wonder about the workload for the next sitting in the spring, when we have a mains budget, which should approach \$1 billion, and probably several pieces of legislation as well. The government has already undertaken to bring the *Children's Act* legislation in, the *Workers' Compensation Act* legislation in, and possibly the smoking bill, along with other supplementary budgets.

The time in the spring is going to be very competitive in order to address the budget and the dollars that are in it. Certainly, we won't be spending the amount of effort speaking to an \$82,000 housekeeping bill at that time, nor should we do that now. We should have been dealing with some of this important legislation at this time instead of deferring it to a busy budget sitting.

There is a lot more I could say about that, but I will keep my promise about remaining succinct.

**Speaker:** If the member speaks, she will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** I appreciate very much having the opportunity to listen to all the comments coming forward from most of the members represented in this Assembly.

There have been some very interesting comments made, certainly coming from the opposite side of the Legislature, and I will take the opportunity to respond to some, but not all, of those.

As our Premier has articulated, I think this particular bill is all about closing out the year-end from 2006-07, which has just come to a close.

Without having to actually articulate in too much detail, I just wanted to put on the public record that, with respect to the actual amount of money -- I think it was \$82,000 that the Member for Kluane made reference to. Actually, if the Member for Kluane will take a look at *Hansard* -- I think it was October 30 -- I would be happy to table it if the member so wishes.

It does go on at great length with respect to the actual breakdown of the supplementary estimates for 2006-07. I'm not going to actually reread the member's speech, but he does go on at great length. It is almost two or three pages long, item by

item. I'd be happy to go into it in greater detail, but I'm sure the Member for Kluane can pick up a copy, or better yet, save a tree and read it on-line and see what comments were made by the Member for Riverdale South. I just put that out there for the Member for Kluane's information.

There have been some comments from the opposite side regarding where monies could have or should have gone. I will make reference to our Premier's earlier comments about where we were, how far we have come and where we have yet to go as well. That was a few short years ago when we were in a financial position that wasn't as rosy; it wasn't as glowing as what we see today. This is due to the combined efforts of many departmental officials, as represented throughout the Government of Yukon. Through the collective efforts of First Nations, the Government of Yukon through the Finance minister's efforts, working with his counterparts, working at the territorial level with Nunavut, N.W.T. as well as defining a better relationship with our respective federal government, regardless of which stripe happens to be represented in Ottawa, I think that we have been able to enhance the net financial resources of this territory. As a result, we as Yukon citizens have been able to benefit from enhanced services and program delivery as represented through each of our departments.

I only have to refer to monies being made available through the northern strategy, affordable housing trust fund, territorial health access fund. I know there has been a lot of discussion here in the Assembly over the years on efforts made to address some of the critical challenges that we face, as Yukoners and as citizens of the globe, in terms of trying to meet health care costs, as well as the challenges as defined by Yukoners.

We have been able to come together with our sister territories. We were able to garner a fairly healthy agreement with the federal government -- \$21 million, as reflected in the territorial health access fund. As a result of those funds and funds being made available internally, there have been many strides and much movement made on the territorial front to address some of these issues in terms of making more incentives available -- enhancements of medical bursaries available to Yukon students pursuing medical professions in their post-secondary education -- and in terms of the Yukon government being able to expand the territorial medical travel program and the dollars allotted to that to extend or expand the subsidy available to Yukoners -- moving that \$75 a day to be available on the second day instead of the fourth day, instead of \$35 being available each day.

Incredible strides are being made on a number of different fronts, striving to make more resources available to our respective hospitals, nursing professionals, health care professionals, and bringing in, attracting, recruiting and retaining more medical health professionals, particularly specialists. I think we've been able to grow the number of specialists and build upon our capacity here in the territory instead of having to go Outside for those services and treatments.

Again, we are working on meeting our accomplishments or meeting our goals and working toward safer, healthier communities.

Our Minister of Justice has made reference to SCAN, safer communities and neighbourhoods legislation. And, of course, with the office up and running -- I think it's almost a year ago that it was first opened up -- we have seen significant improvements, in terms of enforcement of the illicit and illegal activities in our territory.

Through the Yukon Housing Corporation, we were also able to make available a priority housing policy that makes reference for, particularly, victims of abuse fleeing abusive relationships to be put at the top of the list in terms of making social housing available and meeting the needs of those particular individuals.

Again, as the Minister of Justice also articulated, in partnership with First Nations, we are working toward developing a corrections strategic plan. I think we have certainly made so much progress on this front, and we have much more work -- we know that -- in terms of being able to come together and work side by side in coming up with a strategic plan for the Department of Justice -- again, meeting the needs of victims of crime, but also working with the offenders and addressing the specific needs of perpetrators of crime so that we are able to reduce that revolving-door syndrome that the Premier has articulated on many occasions -- reducing the recidivism rate and, again, working toward that end.

There's just reference in terms of legislation. We have been working very hard through the Department of Health and Social Services, in particular with the Council of Yukon First Nations -- again, a very strategic and creative partnership between First Nations and the Yukon government -- to address children in care, a very important subject and a very important issue. This has been by far the most articulate and most comprehensive review ever undertaken in Yukon's history in terms of addressing children's needs and the needs of families who are deservedly in need of additional supports to keep the family unit together, but also addressing those situations when the family unit is no longer able to be maintained.

Education reform is yet another pillar that is articulated in two election platforms over the years. There is so much work being done and it continues to be done at the officials' level, as well as through the good work of our Minister of Education and the respective chiefs, representing the chiefs and Education, on the educational reform project.

There has been much said about the need for further diversification of our economy. I believe that we have, in fact, been working very, very hard on that particular front. We continue to look at strategic industries -- mining, for example -- one only has to look at the resurgence of mining and mineral extraction in this particular territory. It was not very long ago that Yukon saw the first-ever producing hard rock mine come to fruition, the first mine of its kind in about 10 years. We have also seen the benefits accrued as a result of strategic investments in tourism and tourism marketing.

I know the Member for Klondike made the reference, but the national marketing campaign was but one of many investments that this government has made in terms of moving forward and articulating upon tourism as a strategic industry in the territory.

In terms of new investments in the IT sector, our government has made more resources available than any other government in Yukon's history for the advancement of the IT sector. That in turn has enabled the IT sector to build upon its successes. It is building upon capacity. The number of IT professionals in the territory is quite significant. Again, with renewed investments in this particular area, we'll continue to see that particular economic engine grow and expand.

We had quite a debate in the Legislature last week in terms of amendments to the *Subdivision Act* -- again, reflecting our renewed emphasis on agriculture as an industry that has shown great prosperity and, in fact, one only has to take a look at the number of farms in this area. I think it is almost 150 individual farms that are represented in the territory. That to me indicates a very healthy, vibrant economic picture on the agriculture end of it.

In terms of forestry, our government is working on a forest protection act. We are also working to expand and develop forest management strategic plans with our respective First Nation governments. A recent example of that was the agreement that we were able to reach with Champagne and Aishihik First Nations making available wood in an area that has been infested very much so, as a result of beetle-kill.

The arts and culture industries are another fine example of investing in our economic future. There was a recent newspaper article in one of our local media outlets -- I don't have it at my fingertips. By far, the Yukon's investment in arts and culture is the highest in the country. When you break it down, it comes down to about \$113 per person living in the territory, in terms of our investments in the arts and cultural industries.

This will be reflected in arts-related organizations. We've been able to enhance their funding, building upon capacity in the community and being able to reach out to new entities that may want to pursue cultural commitments in their respective communities. We have made new investments in our museums and First Nation heritage cultural centres as well as community interpretive centres.

These are all but a few of the commitments our government has made over the years, and we will continue to invest.

In terms of meeting more commitments on the social side of the ledger, one only has to look -- as I mentioned earlier -- at commitments met through territorial health access funding and new funding made available to enhance the availability and quality of childcare in the territory.

Furthering women's equality: I always like to point out that it was our government that reinstated the Women's Directorate after it had been removed and rolled into another line department. We're very proud to reinstate the Women's Directorate, and we are very proud to have more than doubled the budget of the directorate over the last five years.

Look at our many accomplishments, including monies being made available to aboriginal women, violence prevention and for specific projects that have been driven, created and delivered by aboriginal women to address violence in their respective communities.

In terms of advancing women's equality, whether on the social, political, legal, or economic front, we are making avail-

able women's equality funding, which has resulted in a number of women's organizations receiving multiple-year funding for the very first time in Yukon's history. Liard Aboriginal Women's Society, for example, is but one of a number, including Les EssentiElles, as well as Yukon Status of Women Council. We also have organizations such as Victoria Faulkner Women's Centre. We've been able to build and expand the number of resources available to them through enhanced funding available to the women's advocate program that they deliver and now, more recently, through three-year funding for them to further develop and grow their awareness in our communities.

I'm very pleased to be able to conclude my remarks on this particular budget. It is closing out a very successful year, but I think I would be happy to entertain further comments coming from the opposite side.

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, please poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Agree.

**Mr. Nordick:** Agree.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Agree.

**Mr. McRobb:** Agree.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Agree.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Agree.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Agree.

**Mr. Edzerza:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the notion carried.

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 7 agreed to*

#### Bill No. 39: Second Reading

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 39, standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Hart.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I move that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be now read a second time.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be now read a second time.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I'm pleased to speak at the second reading of the amendments to the *Territorial Court Judiciary*

*Pension Plan Act, 2003*. Before going into the details of the amendments, I want to provide members of this House with some information about the administration of this plan.

The Public Service Commissioner is the plan administrator. In this capacity, the commissioner has delegated certain authorities to an investment committee that oversees the investment of the plan funds. This committee includes the Deputy Minister of Finance; the Assistant Deputy Minister of legal services in the Department of Justice; the director of finance, also in the Department of Justice; and the compensation, research and development analyst in the employee compensation branch of the Public Service Commission. The investment committee functions in a role similar to that of the committee for the MLA pension plan.

Pension plan administrators have a great responsibility. They must consider the continued health of the plan as well as the competing interests of the members and employers. Pension plan administrators need to make difficult decisions.

In the case of the judges' pension plan here in the Yukon, the plan administrator has the expertise of the investment committee as well as the consulting actuaries -- which in the case of the Yukon government is AON Consulting -- to rely on, as well as the commissioner's own knowledge.

In order to balance the rights of members and employers, plan administrators refer to historical plan documents and the legislation for guidance.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that the judges' pension plan cannot be registered if the Yukon *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* does not meet the Canada Revenue Agency requirements. This will negatively affect the use of the pension contribution and the interest earned in the pension fund on the contributions as an income tax deduction.

Before this plan, Yukon judges participated in a federal public service superannuation plan, or PSSP for short. Following recommendations of the 2001 Judicial Compensation Commission, the government withdrew the judges from the PSSP and established a similar plan for judges and the senior presiding justice of the peace -- who had not participated in the PSSP. The actual asset transfer from the public service superannuation plan to the judiciary registered pension plan under Schedule 1 of the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, was recalculated as of January 31, 2006, based on service and pensionable earnings to that date.

Mr. Speaker, the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* provides for a registered pension plan --and Schedule 1 as I noted just a moment ago. If the proposed amendments are not made in order to satisfy revenue requirements, the plan cannot be registered, thus putting us in the untenable position of not being in compliance with our own legislation. The need for age-related amendment is the result of the fact that the 2007 federal budget was changed to provide an increase in the age limits for registered pension plans under the *Income Tax Act*.

Before 2007, Mr. Speaker, individuals could not contribute to a registered pension plan or earn pensionable service beyond the end of the year in which they attained the age of 69. Under the amended *Income Tax Act*, this age is now the end of the year in which the individual turns age 71. Amendment 4 re-

flects this change to the *Income Tax Act*. Amendment 6 adds section 23.1. It was requested by Canada Revenue Agency to explicitly define the registered pension plan limits. This amendment does not change benefits. It clarifies how the benefits are to be split between the registered portion of the judges' pension plan and the registered compensation arrangement -- or RCA -- portion of the plan.

Next, Mr. Speaker, are amendments to 5, 7, 8 and 9. These are technical wording changes as requested by Canada Revenue Agency. The amendments do not change any of the benefits in the plan. Although the prior language has been approved by the CRA in the past, this change in wording was requested, and the Yukon government is complying with that request.

Before inviting questions from the members opposite, I would like to outline the plan provisions. Specifically, I would like to note that the effective date of the plan is January 31, 2006. Membership in the plan is restricted to judges -- other than the deputy judge -- and to the full-time, presiding justice of the peace in the Territorial Court, appointed under the *Territorial Court Act*. Members earn service credits for continuous service after the effective date of the plan, while serving as a judge or as a full-time salaried, presiding justice of the peace. Service credit earned under the public service superannuation plan is also recognized. A member's credited service is limited to a maximum of 35 years, inclusive of pensionable service under the PSSP. Members must contribute seven percent of their earnings to the plan, but if they have just less than 24 years of service, they are not required to contribute to the plan. Member contributions in a calendar year are limited to 70 percent of a member's pension credit, as defined in the *Income Tax Act* regulations, plus \$1,000.

Pensions in payment and deferred pensions are indexed each January and are based on increases in the consumer price index. Members who are disabled will receive an immediate pension, equal to the accrued pension earned to the date of disability, but without reduction of their early retirement. Other plan provisions address interest, retirement dates, pensions payable and the forms of pension terminations other than death or death prior to retirement.

In review, that's all I have for this particular bill.

**Mr. Fairclough:** I will be very short in response to second reading of Bill No. 39. I thank the minister for bringing it forward, as this is housekeeping. We understand and do agree with this amendment. We understand that it is to bring the Territorial Court judiciary pension plan into conformity with the Canada Revenue Agency requirements.

There are only a couple of things in here. One is moving the age from 69 to 71 for those judges who would like to contribute to the registered pension plan. We are in full agreement with that, and we understand that it is a housekeeping amendment.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I will be even shorter than the Member for Mayo-Tatchun in my comments at second reading of Bill No. 39. Yes, it is a housekeeping measure, and it is basically to

bring us into line with the Canada Revenue Agency requirements for the judges' pensions. We will be supporting the bill.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Basically, this goes back to March 2001, when the Government of Yukon tabled legislation that enabled it to meet its legal and constitutional obligations to establish a pension plan for our Territorial Court Judges that is separate from the public service. That is really the heart of this whole thing.

Canada's highest court, the Supreme Court of Canada, ruled in 1998 that judges must be separated from the public service in terms of benefits and salaries. The ruling indicated that even the perception of financial control diminishes the judges' independence from the government.

All provinces and territories were required to establish an independent judicial compensation commission. As a result of the Supreme Court ruling, a Yukon Judicial Compensation Commission comprised of three members was established in 1999 under the *Territorial Court Act*.

The commission makes impartial decisions regarding salaries, pensions, allowances, benefits and other related matters pertaining to the Yukon's Territorial Court Judges and justices of the peace. The Yukon's first Judicial Compensation Commission made its recommendations in January of 1999 to increase benefits to Yukon's judiciary that would bring them more in line with the rest of Canada. The recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission are binding on the Government of Yukon to the extent that they do not exceed the maximum amount of remuneration provided to judiciaries in northern and western Canada. The 2001 Judicial Compensation Commission completed its report and submitted it to the government. The Yukon government accepted the majority of the recommendations of the commission at the time. Necessary amendments were made to the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* after the government examined the cost implications of the recommendations.

The purpose of the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003* is to establish, in accordance with recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission, pension arrangements for judicial persons of the Territorial Court, comprised of a judiciary registered pension plan, a judiciary retirement compensation arrangement and a supplementary judicial pension plan.

Prior to the effective date, judicial persons participated in the public service superannuation plan. Pursuant to the recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Commission, the government decided to withdraw judicial persons from the public service superannuation plan as of the effective date and to set up a substantially similar plan for them, known as the judiciary registered pension plan.

Today we're bringing forward several amendments to the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act*. These amendments are required to address limits on bridge benefits under the registered pension plan portion of the judges' pension arrangement as well as a few other minor amendments. I certainly support these amendments.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** I rise today to point out an important part of the compensation paid to our judiciary. An important component of that compensation is their pension plan. I would like to talk for a few minutes about the process and importance of judicial compensation, which influences their pension benefits.

An independent judiciary is one of the main building blocks of a parliamentary government, which includes the judiciary, Cabinet and the Legislature. The central process of judicial independence is to ensure that judges are impartial so they can make decisions without interference from anyone.

Judicial independence for judges and justices of the peace is paramount because an independent judiciary is one of the building blocks of a parliamentary government, including the judiciary, the executive or Cabinet, and the Legislature.

The leading case on judicial independence is the Supreme Court of Canada's 1997 P.E.I. Reference decision. That case saw the legislation of three provinces struck down as an unconstitutional breach of judicial independence. In those three provinces that the case was based upon, there was a reduction in provincial court judges' salaries by an across-the-board percentage that applied to all persons in the public sector.

This was determined to be unconstitutional by the *PEI* case and, as a result of a 1997 Supreme Court of Canada decision, all provinces and territories were required to establish an independent judicial compensation commission.

The issue of remuneration for the judiciary and the process for determining that remuneration is now unique because the normal compensation bargaining process between an employer and an employee union does not apply. The Supreme Court of Canada determined that judicial independence has three core characteristics.

The first is security of tenure. Judges can't be fired or dealt with adversely because of their decisions. A judge's term in office must be guaranteed, and a judge can't be fired just because the government doesn't like the judge or the judge's decisions.

The second is financial security. A judge's compensation must be determined by an independent commission. Judges should be paid a fair salary, and their salary should be determined by an independent group, not by government. That is why compensation for the Territorial Court Judges must be determined by a JCC and not by the Minister of Justice or the government, as is had been done in the past.

The third is judicial independence. The case affirmed the notion that a judge's working conditions and the manner in which they do their work can't be interfered with by the executive and legislative arms of government. Judges should be separate from the other two branches of government. For example, the law courts and the Law Centre in Whitehorse are in two separate buildings with two separate street addresses and are a living example of institutional independence. The issue of remuneration for the judiciary and the process for determining that remuneration is unique. This means that the normal compensation bargaining process between an employer and an employee union does not apply in this case.

Because all provinces and territories were required to establish an independent JCC as a result of a 1997 P.E.I. Reference case, the *Territorial Court Act* was amended after the case to include provisions for the JCC.

Our judges currently receive \$199,901 and the senior full-time justice of the peace receives \$103,687. These amounts do not include the benefit package, and it should be noted that the Chief Judge receives a further \$8,000 in compensation. All of this is, of course, public information and is available upon request by members of the public from the Department of Justice. Our judiciary makes up an important part of our justice system, and I am pleased as Minister of Justice to have a process that is well understood and results in agreements that support our judicial independence.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments we are talking about here are mostly housekeeping. I commend this bill to this Assembly. Thank you. Gunilschish. Merci.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise on this bill and I do appreciate the comments from the members of the opposition in noting their support for this legislation. I would note, however, that they have characterized it as simply housekeeping and have not, it appears, given reflection to the importance of this bill.

This is a matter, of course, that the government is required to do because of the rulings of the Judicial Compensation Commission and the Canada Revenue Agency requirements related to this area. But I can't let it go by un-noted that it is typical practice of the opposition members that, when they have not done their homework, they refer to something as being housekeeping, as demonstrated in every past sitting since we came into office in 2002, when the members show a great reluctance of getting into the debate of the budget, discussing the numbers, actually discussing substantive matters relevant to Yukoners -- where they are reluctant to engage in that debate to discuss the numbers or to even understand that information. It is certainly unfortunate that they seem to be continuing to brush off all such matters as housekeeping rather than doing their work and engaging in debate on this matter.

The issues related to pension plans are of significance in the ability to recruit and retain employees. Although judges are a specific group and are set up to be independent, it is still a key matter of ensuring appropriate remuneration. The fact that the Canada Revenue Agency requested a number of the changes in this amendment is notable, because if changes are not made to pension plans that meet the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency, then a plan cannot be registered. It's important in pension matters that we understand the role of the Canada Revenue Agency and the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Instruments as the national authority and regulator on such matters.

As members ought to recall from previous debate, we had the issue with the Yukon Hospital Corporation Board and the pension plan for employees where this government was compelled to step forward and to make good on a deficit that had been created, in part, through mistaken decisions by the corporation and by several years of the corporation not complying

with the requirements put on it by the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Instruments, the federal regulator.

We are pleased today that we are moving on from that area, that the current board of the Yukon Hospital Corporation is working hard on all matters related to the hospital and its operations. I had the pleasure of meeting with the members of the board last month and talking about areas where together we need to work in adapting to the challenges that we will face in health care in years to come, both in terms of capital needs and human resources. Of course, we are facing increasing challenges in these matters from coast to coast -- the increasing costs of health care and the increasing challenges in having enough health professionals to fill those roles -- so the Yukon government is working with the board of the Yukon Hospital Corporation and with the administrations, both within the Department of Health and Social Services and within the hospital, and, of course, with the employees. We will continue to build on the steps we have already taken in our health human resources strategy, which, as you are likely aware, we launched in 2006 and included components specific to physicians.

The family physician incentive program is for new graduates, under which we provide financial assistance to Canadian students who have recently graduated medical school in exchange for five years of service in the Yukon, and a new doctor who has applied can also receive up to \$50,000 over the term of that agreement, as well as the creation of the medical education bursary, a second component under the health human resources strategy assisting Yukon students who attend medical school by providing them with up to \$10,000 assistance per year. After graduation, if they enter medical residency in a Yukon family practice, they are eligible for an additional \$15,000 per year.

As well, we have doubled the investment in the nursing education bursary and made it available to twice the number of applicants as were allowed under the old bursary, and that is to a level of \$5,000 per year and is complemented by the other bursary program under this strategy -- the health profession education bursary which supports Yukoners' training for health professions, including pharmacy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology and audiology, medical laboratory, medical radiology, dietetics, nutrition and licensed practical nursing, and that is \$5,000 per year for students in those areas.

I'm just pointing out for members the interlinkage of all these matters. Pension plans are one part of recruitment and retention. Remuneration is one part of recruitment and retention. The areas such as I've outlined relate to what I deal with on a daily basis, in terms of the health area of the spectrum. But of course, as we face a strong economy and face a growing challenge in skilled labour, whether it be health professionals or in the trades, it is increasingly important that, collectively as a society and as a government, we take the steps necessary to ensure the appropriate structure in all areas that the government is responsible for funding to provide appropriate remuneration, appropriate pensions and appropriate strategies such as the health human resources strategy as I outlined, that we work on to recruit and retain professionals in those areas to ensure that

Yukon citizens have the very best professionals in all key areas of the spectrum, whether within the public sector, within departments, whether within the health care field both within the department and through the Yukon Hospital Corporation and, of course, in other areas for which we have funding responsibility such as, in this case, the pension plan for the judiciary.

This amendment is a part of recognizing the requirements placed on us by the federal agencies responsible. For that reason, it's a pleasure to see the members supporting it, if not debating or reflecting an interest in the details that relate to this.

Before I conclude my remarks, I should note that in addition to the assistance the Yukon government provided to the hospital pension plan and that the Yukon government provided to those employees -- though it was not strictly a funding responsibility of YTG, we stepped forward to ensure those employees had the pensions they paid into and that Yukoners would be benefited by having a hospital that provides appropriate remuneration, that honours its obligations to employees, and that takes the appropriate steps, including remuneration and pensions to recruit and retain employees.

Other areas, of course, where the Yukon government, due to issues such as underperforming in funds and deficits, was compelled to step in, in addition to the hospital, included the Yukon College pension plan -- we stepped forward to ensure that employees there had their pensions -- and, of course, within our own area of responsibility, the Yukon government employees.

Again I thank members for their support of this legislation and I encourage them to take the time to understand the importance of pensions and other remuneration in recruitment and retention and in ensuring that Yukoners have the professionals they need and they have the access to the very best, and that those people are paid and supported appropriately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** If the member now speaks, he will close debate. Does any other member wish to be heard?

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I would like to thank all the individuals for their comments today with regard to this bill. I look forward to their support.

**Speaker:** Are you prepared for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** Division.

#### Division

**Speaker:** Division has been called.

#### Bells

**Speaker:** Mr. Clerk, would you poll the House.

**Hon. Mr. Fentie:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Taylor:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Kenyon:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** Agree.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** Agree.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Agree.



**Mr. Nordick:** Agree.

**Mr. Mitchell:** Agree.

**Mr. McRobb:** Agree.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Agree.

**Mr. Inverarity:** Agree.

**Mr. Cardiff:** Agree.

**Mr. Edzerza:** Agree.

**Clerk:** Mr. Speaker, the results are 14 yea, nil nay.

**Speaker:** The yeas have it. I declare the motion carried.

*Motion for second reading of Bill No. 39 agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve into Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker leaves the Chair*

## COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 39, *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*.

Do members wish to take a brief recess before we begin?

**All Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Chair:** Committee of the Whole will recess for 15 minutes.

*Recess*

**Chair:** Order please. Committee of the Whole will now come to order.

### Bill No. 39 -- Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003

**Chair:** The matter before the Committee is Bill No. 39, *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*. We will now proceed with general debate.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** I'll just give a brief opening here. The judges' pension plan cannot be registered because the Yukon *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act* does not meet the Canada Revenue Agency requirements. This will negatively affect the use of the pension plan contributions and the interest earned in a pension fund on contributions as an income tax deduction. The act provides for a registered pension plan in Schedule 1 if the amendment is not made. The plan cannot be registered and will therefore not be in compliance with act.

The 2007 federal budget was changed to provide for an increase in the age limits from registered pension plans under the *Income Tax Act*. Before 2007, individuals could not contribute to a registered pension plan or earn pensionable service beyond the end of the year in which they attained the age of 69. Under the amended *Income Tax Act*, this age is now the end of the

year in which the individual turns age 71. Clause 4 reflects this change to the *Income Tax Act*.

Clause 6 adds section 23.1. It was requested by Canada Revenue Agency to explicitly define the registered pension plan limits. This amendment does not change benefits. It clarifies how the benefits are split between the registered pension plan portion of the judges' plan and the registered compensation arrangement, or RCA, portion of the plan.

Clauses 5, 7, 8 and 9 are technical wording changes requested by the Canada Revenue Agency. The amendments do not change any of the benefits in the plan. The prior language had been approved by the CRA in the past, but the change in wording is requested.

Mr. Chair, now we're ready for questions.

**Mr. Fairclough:** Mr. Chair, as I said earlier, we the Official Opposition are in agreement with the amendment to the *Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*. We understand it. We understand that it is to conform to the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency. We understand the amendments and do not have any questions.

Thank you.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I really don't have any questions. I'll maybe repeat my comments from second reading. We do view this as a housekeeping amendment to meet the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency, and we thank the Minister of Justice for pointing that out so rightly, and maybe she could explain the fact that it is a housekeeping piece of legislation to the Government House Leader, who, right after she made that statement, didn't seem to understand what a housekeeping piece of legislation was.

We understand what this is, and we will support it.

**Chair:** Is there any further general debate?

We will proceed with clause-by-clause consideration of Bill No. 39, *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Act, 2003*.

*On Clause 1*

*Clause 1 agreed to*

*On Clause 2*

*Clause 2 agreed to*

*On Clause 3*

*Clause 3 agreed to*

*On Clause 4*

*Clause 4 agreed to*

*On Clause 5*

*Clause 5 agreed to*

*On Clause 6*

*Clause 6 agreed to*

*On Clause 7*

*Clause 7 agreed to*

*On Clause 8*

*Clause 8 agreed to*

*On Clause 9*

*Clause 9 agreed to*

*On Clause 10*

*Clause 10 agreed to*

*On Title*

*Title agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Mr. Chair, I move that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be reported without amendment.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Hart that Bill No. 39, entitled *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, be reported without amendment.

*Motion agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** I move that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

**Chair:** It has been moved by Mr. Rouble that the Speaker do now resume the Chair.

*Motion agreed to*

*Speaker resumes the Chair*

**Speaker:** I will now call the House to order.

May the House have a report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole?

#### Chair's report

**Mr. Nordick:** Mr. Speaker, Committee of the Whole has considered Bill No. 39, *Act to Amend the Territorial Court Judiciary Pension Plan Act, 2003*, and directed me to report it without amendment.

**Speaker:** You have heard the report from the Chair of Committee of the Whole. Are you agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** We will now proceed to Government Bills.

### GOVERNMENT BILLS

#### Bill No. 8: Second Reading -- *adjourned debate*

**Clerk:** Second reading, Bill No. 8, standing in the name of the Hon. Ms. Taylor; adjourned debate, the Hon. Mr. Hart.

**Speaker:** Minister of Community Services, you have 13 minutes left.

**Hon. Mr. Hart:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I left off previously discussing my appreciation for all the staff and volunteer efforts during this summer's flood in the Southern Lakes and Lake Laberge area. We had record high water throughout the Yukon and other areas such as Atlin and Watson Lake endured flood damage.

Of course, the flood was the big issue in the summer. We saw water levels higher than anyone would have imagined. Lake water in Marsh Lake broke all previous high-water records. In light of the new high water level, mitigation efforts were stepped up. Protective Services established a mobile command centre at the Marsh Lake day-use area for operations, information and coordination purposes. From this location, local planning directed harm mitigation and sandbagging efforts were coordinated.

I would like to point out that, through this prioritization and coordination approach, the volunteer efforts were applied where they were needed the most. It was a very effective use of resources and volunteer contributions.

When I was filling sandbags, I could see that the volunteers' efforts were appreciated by the folks who live in and around the Marsh Lake area.

Subsequent to the immediate flood response, the government introduced the 2007 Yukon flood relief initiative to provide access to financial assistance for property owners whose dwellings suffered damage from the record high water levels in the affected flooding ranges of Southern Lakes, Lake Laberge and the Liard River region.

Mitigation efforts led by the Yukon government were focused on preventing or minimizing damages to property. The flood relief initiative was developed to assist property owners to make their dwellings safe and comfortable once again. Through this initiative, government is also able to address water quality concerns related to public health. We wanted to ensure the safety of septic systems, water wells and water tanks for the benefit of the property owners and the environment in and around them.

The 2007 Yukon flood relief initiative provides two financial assistance methods based on the normal use of the property. Grants are available to repair flood damage to the principal residence, and interest-free loans of up to \$35,000 are available to repair flood-related damages on recreational dwellings as well as outbuildings.

This government led the way in assessing the situation and amassed the resources and equipment needed to tackle the situation. A coordinated approach to the emergency was taken, with priority being placed on personal safety, main infrastructure, outbuildings and transportation routes.

I'm pleased to report there were no fatalities or major injuries resulting from the flood; however, there was a vast array of flood damage that occurred, depending upon where one was located.

We are providing a loan program for those with damage to recreational property and outbuildings through the Yukon Housing Corporation, and those with permanent residences are being assisted through the federal government program.

Now, at this point I want to emphasize that we are covering this expenditure until it can be recovered from the federal government so that residents can repair their homes and take preventive actions immediately.

Assessments are currently underway for the damage, and we are trying to anticipate any issues that may arise in the interim prior to coming to a long-term solution. We are assessing the septic and water situations throughout the area and doing what we can to ensure that safe drinking water and septic facilities are operational through the winter months.

On that point, we have hired specific expertise to assist Yukon Housing Corporation with these assessments in the region, and we have also hired the appropriate scientific staff to provide us with some guidance on, for example, septic facilities -- when and how they were pulled out and at what level they

have to be maintained in order to keep them operational through the winter.

We are working with all the required departments -- Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment, Energy, Mines and Resources, Highways and Public Works, and ourselves -- in developing a long-term solution for the area. Consultation with those affected will be another major goal for reaching an amicable solution for the majority.

I can only say that, fortunately, we did not have any major fires this summer. As a result, we were able to utilize the services of wildland fire management for the summer, which was greatly appreciated by those needing assistance and those needing direction in mitigating their damage. I think it was most opportune. We did have fires in the northern Dawson region, but we were able to maintain a constant supply of personnel here in the Whitehorse area to assist with the flooding mitigation.

Mr. Speaker, recently, with regard to this, I believe the demonstration of the government's action this summer and the fire in 2004 show that we have the ability to respond to emergencies and that the recent announcement regarding the transfer of the EMS branch to the Community Services EMO unit can be met with limited impact on the department. The EMS branch will still have its affiliation with the health profession, and the government will continue to enhance the professional EMS program within the new emergency response structure and maintain the EMS relationship as an integral part of continuing health care facilities here in the Yukon.

The transfer of staff will occur in December of this year and is a key component of modernizing the Yukon's overall emergency response structure. Bringing all the Yukon's emergency response agencies together under one roof will contribute positively toward further improving the Yukon's emergency response capabilities. We are moving forward on our commitment to provide the best possible coordinated first response to emergencies throughout the territory.

A new structure will enhance the development of harmonized services and build capacity within the organization, reduce the burden on volunteers and improve the overall emergency response capability. We will be addressing all our emergency response facilities: equipment, maintenance and training needs. Bringing EMS to the protective services branch will provide a new opportunity to take a big-picture approach to our operations, including administration, coordination and support, to ensure that the continued protection, safety and well-being of Yukoners in each and every community are met. As stated by our Premier, we are hoping to provide one of the best emergency first responses throughout Canada.

Also in Community Services, a very important program is FireSmart. That's another very effective initiative dealing with the mitigation of natural events in relationship to communities.

FireSmart funds projects that help reduce the threat posed by wildland fires in and around Yukon communities. It's basically the area between the forest and the community -- the interface. This winter, FireSmart projects will take place in almost every Yukon community. As you may know, the FireSmart program is now well-established here in the Yukon. Many

benefits of the FireSmart program are well known and understood and supported by First Nations, community associations and local governments. They each perform FireSmart work in and around their communities each and every year.

The FireSmart initiative is an important preventive measure: it reduces the risk of fire and that's the key aspect. It's not meant as a panacea for preventing forest fires coming into the community; it's just meant to reduce risk and provide awareness to community members to ensure that they take the action necessary to protect their actual infrastructure.

The FireSmart initiative focuses on removing deadfall, vegetation debris and other forest fuels, thinning of the trees, planting less flammable tree species -- poplar versus conifers, for example. FireSmart also funds helping the community develop long-term wildland safety plans. They create firebreaks; they make roadways more accessible for firefighting equipment, so if a fire does happen in and around a community, the firebreaks do provide an excellent venue in which to bring in our Cats and heavy equipment to fight the larger blaze. The program also puts Yukoners to work by supporting the use of local resources and skills where applicable.

There are many groups eligible to receive funding for the FireSmart project. First Nation governments, municipalities, school councils, community associations and registered non-profit societies are all eligible to apply for funding under the FireSmart program.

We have also made available the FireSmart program handbook. You can get a copy at the Yukon public libraries, the Government of Yukon inquiry desk here in Whitehorse, the wildland fire management district offices in rural communities, or from the Yukon government Web site. In addition, we do provide firesmartering for individual properties through wildland fire management. We have been very successful in promoting, through education, firesmartering your individual property. We do not do the work on private property, but we do provide courses on dealing with firesmartering within your own personal property.

It's something that we've done, as I said, a lot of over the last few years. It provides additional education to the threat of fire on one's infrastructure -- i.e., house and/or outbuildings adjacent to the forest most of us live around and/or near. It's a program that really came to light, Mr. Speaker, with the fires in 2003 in Kelowna, British Columbia as well as our own fires in 2004. You can imagine that there was a great demand for our services in 2005 as a result of the fires in 2004. So we looked at moving on in that program and we're heading out to wrap that.

I see that I have very limited time, so I would like to wrap up by saying we're looking forward to the year coming up and we anticipate meeting our challenges that are necessary to provide excellent response to emergencies throughout the Yukon.

**Mr. Inverarity:** I'd just like to start my opening remarks here -- I'd like to thank my wife and my children for supporting me, first of all, in the decision to seek office, and their support in the past has been very supportive and I look forward to the next few years. I'd also like to thank the residents of Porter Creek South for having significant trust in me

and electing me as their representative here. I think I'd also like to thank the Porter Creek Community Association, primarily for their insights and their thoughtfulness and their advice on how I should represent myself here in this House and how I should conduct myself.

I see by the members who have come before me that we have all been very supportive of the volunteers who participated in the Marsh Lake, Lake Laberge, Carcross and Southern Lakes flooding activity of the summer. I can't really say enough about the volunteer support that went on, and I know that I was down here in the city sandbagging one day with the mayor and the Commissioner, and I have to say that we had a good time. I know that the initiative itself is very trying on the residents, particularly in the Marsh Lake area, but when people band together and do things together, it brings the community as a whole together and it puts aside partisan issues. It is nice to see that we can work side by side for the common good and the betterment of all Yukoners.

I think I would be remiss in not discussing global warming just a little bit further along, and particularly climate change, because while we all were very, very concerned about the flooding in the Marsh Lake and Southern Lakes area, parallel to that, there was another whole issue going on in the Yukon that a lot of people didn't pay a lot of attention to -- mostly because while we had three or four metres of excess water in the Southern Lakes, while we were up to our gumboots and hipboots, there was another section of the Yukon that was actually drying up.

My colleague from Vuntut Gwitchin was quite vocal in the springtime about some lakes in his riding that have dried up. But the problem actually goes far beyond that. I have a friend who has a wild Arctic char lake that is stocked in the Braeburn area, and in the past two years he has seen the volume of water in his lake drop by 60 percent, to the point where the Arctic char that are in the lake are dying off and the stocks are being depleted -- and that is not the only lake. I am sure his circumstances might appear to be just an arbitrary aberration, but when you put it together with the lakes in the Vuntut Gwitchin area -- and I don't know if anyone has been camping at Fox Lake, for example, this summer, but we have significant drop in that particular lake of about five or six feet.

I know the Premier here has mentioned a number of times about the different things we have to look at with regard to climate warming. Certainly, on one hand, we are going to see these aberrations where we have excess water and rain and things like that that are going on in one area, and in other areas we are seeing massive drying going on at a significant scale. I would like to make sure that the government sees both sides of this climate change issue and that it's not just one way or the other.

I wouldn't be surprised if we don't see more significant things happening -- higher annual rainfalls in some places and less in others. I think it's an issue that we have to pay close attention to.

I think at this point I'd like to move on to some of the areas that I am a critic for, and I think I'll start with Department of Justice. It has been the focus of some of my questions the last

few days. I'd like to say that most of the problems that I'm having within this critic area probably stem from the simple fact that the Liberals were in the government around the turn of the century. We had decided to embark upon building a new correctional facility and then that was put on hold. We can all look at things in hindsight. I think that there are areas in which we all make mistakes, and I feel that this is a particular mistake that was made, not to move forward with some facility. Had the new government gone ahead with this facility -- and perhaps they have a new vision and that's fine. But I think it probably could have been accommodated within the new structure that was going to go forward. We wouldn't be in the situation today where we're seeing high rates of remand, for example, in the correctional facility. We see people who are charged with major offences -- murder, rape and things like this -- who are in remand. Some of them have been there longer than two years less a day, which is an important issue because, really, the facility was only designed to house real criminals for two years less a day. Anybody else who was a serious offender was to go to a federal facility Outside where they would do hard time. I think when we look back on this decision that we're going to have to live with now through 2011 and maybe 2012, that is going to cause a lot of problems.

In looking at the budget for the Department of Justice, I happened to notice also that there is only one percent of the actual budget being given over to the Human Rights Commission and human rights in general. I find this a deplorable statistic and I think this government should make a commitment to spend more money on human rights issues. I think we could solve a lot of problems by addressing them. Certainly they could be dealt with better.

In terms of the SCAN legislation -- we talked about it just last week in the House, and I guess I was sort of half-expecting to give this speech last week in the House, but I think it's important to reiterate my beliefs on SCAN.

I think that anything that reduces crime in neighbourhoods is an important factor. I think the ability to go in and take the approach we're taking -- where we're advising the druggies and prostitution and things along those lines that SCAN was supposed to protect against -- is working to the point where it's getting these individuals to move on.

The problem -- as I pointed out this week -- is that we don't know where they're moving on to. They're moving into other communities. The downside to that is that it may take them awhile to set up shop again, but the problem is that we have no idea where they've moved to or how long it is. We have to wait for another complaint to come in, in order to actually go about asking them to move on again. So, we keep bouncing and bouncing and bouncing.

I don't know how the other jurisdictions -- I think Manitoba is one that had similar SCAN legislation in place -- dealt with this particular ongoing issue. I guess, in a city of hundreds of thousands, it doesn't matter where they bounce to because they probably won't be identified.

Another problem is the fact that some of these individuals go underground, and they may not surface because they've obviously been caught once. So, you know, I don't think that

they're necessarily dummies as drug dealers, so they are probably looking to be better at what they do. So it's more incumbent that we pay more attention to them and to where they're moving on.

I mentioned earlier a little bit about the human rights budget, and I'm going to bring it up specifically here, under an area that I think is legislation-related, and I'm moving on to that. I think we need to look at meaningful legislation. I think that one of the bills we're going to be debating, which is the *Securities Act*, is a significant piece of legislation. I know it's to bring it in line with other things.

But we also need to look at the other pieces of legislation, which I've been asking for now for a year that I've been in the House, particularly the human rights legislation.

I think that the minister in the spring indicated that they are going to strike a committee or have her department look at reviewing all the human rights legislation. This can be a real win. This is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Yukon human rights legislation. Here is an opportunity for us to look at this legislation, review it, and bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This could be a real win for everybody, not just the individuals who are affected by human rights legislation, but for the government itself to strike up a committee, to look at this act and come in with some meaningful time frames where we can look at this legislation.

I have to say that the track record on doing this is not as good as I'd like to see it, Mr. Speaker. I look at the *Workers' Compensation Act* review. I think it took us five years to get to this point. I won't go there. They came forward with 88 recommendations. I understand that this legislation has now been put on hold. I can tell you that there are individuals who have come to me and said, "I have been told by ministers, and I've been told by the Workers' Compensation Board, to expect this act review and this legislation this fall." In fact, some of them have even gone so far as to say, "Expect a big cheque by Christmastime." Yet, it isn't coming forward. These are people who are affected by this legislation. They can't move forward. They are being stalled. They are caught in a catch-22 situation. They can't even sue the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board for inaction, because it's against the law to do that.

As a result, they are stymied. They cannot work, and I suspect this decision is going to impact on this government and its reputation that they have been trying so hard to sustain and build up over the past five years. This single piece of legislation that they are going to defer now to the spring is going to hurt them at the polls, I think.

Other pieces of legislation that I'd like to see some activity on, of course, are the *Children's Act* review, the *Education Act* reform review, and the *Animal Protection Act* -- how many of us have stood up here and we've witnessed or read in the paper things that have been done animals? These animals can't complain to us. It is incumbent upon us to look out for animals, not just domestic animals, but also the ones that are in the wild. I mean, we heard last week about the ticks. Here it is: we've introduced a species, we're supposed to be the caretakers of these animals, and what do we do? They are infested. We debate and debate, and instead of getting on and doing something -- well,

I'm sorry, I think it is time that we take some action on these issues.

The other ones I'm talking about include the forest stewardship act and *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. We have some on other issues and I'm trying to remember one in particular. It will come to me in a few minutes.

On the environment -- and I touched briefly in my opening address on the global warming issue -- one of the things that I know the Minister of Economic Development has talked about in the past, and that is an e-waste user fee for people buying electronic goods, some sort of fee that gets attached to the purchase of some electronic waste. I know it has been kicked around within the government, but again, there has been no action as to what to do about it.

I've seen first-hand in my association with the computers for schools program that there are tonnes and tonnes of government computers being dealt with -- most of them are government computers, not just Yukon, but also federal -- and there are some larger businesses in town that wisely have given computers to the computers for schools program. But then there is very little money in which to process it and get it developed. On the bright side, I have seen some of the Yukon's computers go to school systems as far away as Swaziland in southern Africa, to Fiji. They appreciate them. They reuse them, they recycle them, and I think we should encourage more of that.

Finally I'd like to talk a few minutes on economic development. As most of you know here, I have grown up in the mining industry. My father was a prospector and a mining executive. He's still working in the mining industry. He's trying to put a property together right now in southern British Columbia, a magnetite mine. He's 90 years old and still working in the mining industry. So I don't have to discuss my beliefs and what I think about mining and oil and gas. They're solid, and I believe in them.

But in my past occupation with the Entrepreneurship Centre here in the Yukon, I had a belief that there was more than just taking raw materials out of the Yukon and selling them for export. While I think that is a good thing to do today, I think we also need to look at the big, broad picture, because these are non-renewable resources. We need to establish a relationship with Yukon businesses whereby we develop the next stage -- take these and process them another level, perhaps. But perhaps we could also look at developing other based industries. I talk about things like business incubation for small businesses. How about an incubator that takes manufacturing -- boxing up small goods. We have a number of people in the Yukon who manufacture jelly, jams, honey -- a variety of products -- and they all need a packaging facility. They could co-op and share a packaging facility that would be strong and well-used within the Yukon.

I'd like to touch briefly on TILMA, but before I do that, I'd like to say that I believe that it's time that the Department of Economic Development has a new vision. I think they need to look again at the vision that they brought forward about 18 months ago, and it's time to update it and make it better, make it stronger for small businesses in the Yukon to participate in the economy that we have today.

Finally, in terms of talking about TILMA, which is the trade, investment and labour mobility agreement between the jurisdictions, I think I need more information; I need to understand the implications and I think we need to sit down and hash it out. There is one side that is clearly out there and we have yet to hear from business and from the current government as to what they truly believe this agreement will do -- if it's good for the Yukon, or if it's not good for the Yukon. Sitting on the fence isn't the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for your time today. I appreciate the effort to address the House today and I look forward to line-by-line debate.

Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Rouble:** It's my honour and pleasure to rise today in our Assembly and support this budget. It was just a little over a year ago when we as politicians had the opportunity to knock on the doors of our constituents and neighbours throughout the territory and have the face-to-face discussion about where we stood on issues and where we saw the territory going.

The Yukon Party put together a platform and a vision that was based on four pillars: achieving a better quality of life by building healthy, safe communities with skilled and adaptable people; protecting Yukon's pristine environment, preserving our wildlife and studying and mitigating the impacts of climate change; promoting a strong, diversified private-sector economy by developing Yukon's vast, natural resources, wilderness tourism potential, agriculture, arts and culture, information technology, and film and sound, as well as traditional industries -- outfitting and trapping. We also went to Yukoners and said that, if we were elected, we would continue practising good governance with strong fiscal management and a climate of cooperation, collaboration and partnership with our First Nation governments, our two sister territories, our provincial counterparts and the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, the electorate of the Yukon raised its collective voice and endorsed the Yukon Party and said they want the Yukon Party to continue to implement the vision in the territory that has been outlined and to continue in the direction that the territory has been going.

The voters stood up and, for the first time in many, many years, said, "Yes, we want to vote for a government continuing rather than voting to throw the old government out."

I am very proud to be part of a two-term government, this being a rarity here in the territory. It means that the electorate thought we were on the right track and wanted to see the territory continue in that direction. That's what this supplementary budget does: it builds upon our first budget as a re-elected party from last spring and it continues in the direction we are heading.

I think the outcomes of our effort to date are quite obvious. Members in here have commented on them quite a bit. We have seen strong economic indicators, that being employment increasing, investment increasing, and investment from outside organizations. Either from outside the Whitehorse area or outside of the territory from other parts of Canada and, indeed

from around the world, we have investment coming into the territory instead of having U-Haul trailers heading out.

We are now in a very good financial position. The books certainly reflect that. I should add, too, that for five years in a row now, the Auditor General of Canada has given the books a clean bill of health and there aren't any qualifiers on there. Our financial position is a very positive one. We have cash in the bank. It makes it quite a bit easier and better to manage the activities of the territory when you're working on a cash balance rather than, as was done in the past, operating on a line of credit.

I'm sure members in here would quite agree that, when they have cash in their bank account, it's much easier to make longer-term decisions than if they're worrying about taking a cash advance on their VISA card to pay for the groceries.

I'm very proud of the financial situation that we're in. It's a good one, it's a solid one, and it gives us the flexibility to respond to the issues of importance to the territory and to implement long-term strategies and solutions for the benefit of all Yukoners.

The key budget of the year, of course, is the mains, which we presented earlier this year, and now we're here debating the supplementary budget. The supplementary budget allows the government to respond to unanticipated challenges and also to take advantage of new opportunities to see where the positive investment is having its most beneficial impacts and continue to support that, and to look at some of the other problem areas where that also needs to be supported.

Well, I think we'll all agree that flooding in the beautiful Southern Lakes area and throughout the Yukon certainly falls into the category of "unanticipated challenges". Last winter, when we looked at the high snowfall that was coming, there were indicators that the water this year was going to be higher than normal. I applaud Yukon Energy Corporation for some of its initial meetings very early in the spring, out in the communities of Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake, and in working with people, saying that the indicators were illustrating that we were going to have higher than normal water. But I don't think anyone anticipated the amount of water that we did have throughout the system.

The flooding in the communities of Upper Liard, Carcross, Tagish and Marsh Lake, and then down into Lake Laberge, had a significant impact on all of the residents, cottagers and cabin owners in the area. I would like to thank -- to give a tremendous thank you -- to all Yukoners for their tremendous response to this issue.

I'd like to thank the individuals who helped out, the organizations, the businesses, government departments and the media. It isn't often that we thank the media in this Assembly, but they did a tremendous job in getting the word out on how people could support and the situation that people were in and really encouraging people to chip in and do what they could. This was such a large event. It really did draw upon every aspect of the government, from Community Services to Highways and Public Works, to Health and Social Services, to Yukon Housing Corporation -- all the departments were involved, especially the Emergency Measures Organization and

the folks in our protective services. I would really like to applaud all their hard work and dedication in getting out there and getting the job done. As well, the community-based organizations, the local advisory councils in the different communities, the volunteer fire departments, the volunteer EMS people and the community associations all did a tremendous job in coming together and helping out their fellow citizen and their neighbour.

As well, folks helped out when they didn't even know their neighbours. We saw a great outpouring of support from the community here in Whitehorse with sandbagging either out at Marsh Lake or in some of the other communities or at the grader station here. During the event, I had the opportunity to be very involved, of course, not only as a member of Cabinet, but also in attendance at the EMO meetings, to filling sandbags and helping place them. What I really have to applaud, too, is the amount of coordination that went into things: when the bell was rung, so to speak, and the forces were galvanized, the reaction from the various different departments was tremendous.

Also, it broke a lot of the stereotypes that many people often attribute unfortunately to government. This was a situation where, when good ideas were presented, they were embraced. It wasn't a case of saying that solution hasn't been invented here or by us. People approached the situation with open ears, open minds and a strong desire to see the situation addressed as best it could be. There was work with the community association in Marsh Lake to bring in an outside expert, a fellow who had experience working with this type of flood before, Mr. Dean Gould. I applaud the department for working with him and bringing him in and listening. Often we hear criticisms of government that it is very close-minded. No, in this case, there were situations where people did look at creative solutions.

The idea of asking the folks at the correctional facility to get involved was warmly and quickly embraced. We soon had the people up at the correctional facility filling sandbags, volunteering to fill sandbags, in order to help out the flood victims.

Someone had the idea that if the volunteers are here in Whitehorse, why not put in a sandbagging station here to alleviate the traffic and the amount of time it took to get out to Marsh Lake. That worked. It was a great idea and it was one that was warmly received by all.

I know there was a certain amount of initial response to it, but I would like to caution everyone that we in the Southern Lakes are not out of the woods on this issue yet. It isn't over. There are people who are still not back in their homes. There is water in their basements or their crawl-spaces, or their septic systems have been compromised to a degree that they are not usable now. We still have people who aren't in their own home. Chances are they won't be able to get back into their own home until next spring when people can go in and do the appropriate work underground with replacing septic tanks or ensuring they are working properly and, as well, taking the long-term steps to look and prevent things like mould and other water damage.

There are situations that are ongoing. I would also like to strongly applaud the government for the very fast work with 2007 flood relief initiative. This is a program with Community

Services and Yukon Housing Corporation, and it is responding to the urgent and immediate need for assistance in repairing people's primary residence and in providing zero-percent interest relief for loans to do mitigative and preventive work to primary residences and cabins in the area. It is a great initiative, and for people who have not registered with it yet, I encourage all folks in the area to get registered just in case next spring, when the water dries up and people are able to get in and look underneath their foundations and to more closely inspect their septic systems and water systems -- that if there are problems there, they can take advantage of the programs that have come forward the government. Again, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank the officials for their professionalism, dedication, commitment to getting the job done and their ability to listen, think and then act -- a job well done.

Mr. Speaker, this budget does provide the financing for, I believe, the Department of Community Services and, to a degree, Yukon Housing Corporation to support these initiatives. I ask all members of this Assembly to show their support and vote in favour of this budget. I think it is going to accomplish some very good things.

Also, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, this supplementary budget responds to the needs and opportunities across the spectrum of government responsibilities. I think just about every department in the government is affected by this budget. The ministers responsible, their deputy heads and their departments had the opportunity to evaluate things throughout the year and identify which programs were working well, which areas needed more attention and what they could work on in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I see that I've only got five minutes left. There is so much good stuff in this budget, I'm wondering if members opposite would indulge me and allow me to have 40 minutes to respond to this. I'm not seeing any opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I'll just quickly go through some of the highlights here. In Health and Social Services, the supplementary budget provides the approval of the financial expenditure for opening new beds at Copper Ridge Place, for funding the youth Outreach worker and the Outreach van, to enhance childcare services, and for the creation of the childcare capital fund -- all very good initiatives.

In Community Services, the budget provides for water delivery trucks, for flood and erosion control, and for further enhancements to the Carcross waterfront, for which I'd like to thank the Minister of Community Services. This year, we did see the opening of the new walk bridge at Carcross. As well, this budget includes the funding to do many of the Hamilton Boulevard upgrades.

In Economic Development, it includes budget allocations for the regional economic development fund, community development fund, for strategic industries, and for technology partnerships as well as funds for Dana Naye Ventures to assist them in their ongoing good work.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party stands up and says, "Invest; invest now." Well, this is a concrete investment. And I trust that, with his call for action earlier today, he'll see

that that is reflected in the budget and will then continue to support it.

In the area of Economic Development, though, I'm afraid that I must comment on the issue of the speaker before me, wherein he wanted the 18-month-old vision updated. I think we have an 18-month-old vision -- what I want to see on that one is continued action and implementation. Let's not, just yet, go back and do another planning exercise. Let's build upon the birth of this new vision, see that it's implemented, and measure and monitor the results. Then, once we've figured out what's working effectively and what needs to be fine-tuned, then go back and re-evaluate the vision. But right now, let's get out there and get the work going.

Mr. Speaker, on Environment, there is a half-million dollar increase for environmental sustainability. In Highways and Public Works, we're investing in our road and highway structure and the Tombstone visitor reception centre.

In Education -- I'll go into those in more specific details during Committee of the Whole debate -- we see investments into teachers' salaries; into the Tantalus School; into the implementation of the recommendations of the school planning study. The members opposite say we need more long-range plans. Well, they're in the budget. One of the line items in there is a review of secondary programs. This is in acting on one of the recommendations of the school planning study. The tender was released in the paper last week. We'll begin that visioning exercise very quickly.

There is investment in the School of Visual Arts, the community training trusts and youth-at-risk programs. Specifically, in the Southern Lakes, there are the flood relief initiatives that I've mentioned. Additionally, there are funds for the Carcross waterfront. I'd like to thank the Minister of Tourism. This year we did see the visitor reception centre, which has been very busy. In fact, I believe that there are more people who come through the visitor reception centre in Carcross than come through any other visitor centre in the territory. The folks do a great job there and now, with the return of the White Pass train, we will see more and more people.

This past year with the flooding that happened there, rather than just shutting the building down, the Department of Tourism was very quick to respond and they put in a temporary trailer to provide the necessary services to the visitors. My hat goes off to the Minister of Tourism and her department for their quick thinking and their willingness to respond to a very important issue in the community and not just say, "that's it for this season." They did a great job and we appreciate their commitment to Carcross and their commitment to tourism in the territory.

This supplementary budget builds on the excellent budget put forward in the spring. It is responsive to the urgent and unanticipated and real needs of Yukoners. It does respond to some of the motions put forward by the Official Opposition today and last week.

Last week, we heard one party commit to -- I can see my time is up. I would just like to thank all members and request their support of this excellent budget.

**Mr. Cardiff:** I am pleased once again to be here representing the interests of my constituents in the riding of Mount Lorne. Throughout the summer months, I managed to attend a number of community events and meetings. I am very appreciative of the time that my constituents took to spend their time providing me with their perspectives on the current and future needs of the Yukon and of their community. I want to thank them for providing me with that direction.

I was also fortunate this summer to travel to a number of other areas of the Yukon. That has provided me with a comprehensive perspective on the feelings and opinions of Yukoners throughout our communities. I participated this spring with the Association of Yukon Communities at their annual general meeting in Dawson City, which included the mayors and councils from around the Yukon and members of the local area councils. That was a three-day event where they discussed the needs of their communities and their relationship with the current government in great detail.

That was also attended by the ministers, and it was interesting to listen to the ministers' perspective and the ministers' responses to their needs and concerns.

As well, this summer, I managed to attend -- and I was very pleased to attend -- the Council of Yukon First Nations annual general assembly at historic Moosehide, just down the river from Dawson City. I learned a great deal there from the Yukon chiefs and councils who were in attendance and the extended family of chiefs and councils from across the border in the Northwest Territories.

I mentioned this the other day -- I believe, last Wednesday -- that I had attended. It was amazing how that assembly went. I was honoured and impressed to witness the cooperative and respectful approach that this governance body, the Council of Yukon First Nations, took with its deliberations. I would heartily recommend other members of this Legislative Assembly to attend because I think they could learn from the constructive approach that is taken there.

I would also like to take note of something else that happened there. At the closing of the day on the day that I attended, the entire assembly, visitors included, joined hands and sought solace in remembrance of one of our community's youth who went missing this spring. It was a moving and touching moment when communities from around the Yukon reached out to the family and let them know that their thoughts were with them. I am speaking, of course, of Angel Carlick.

I remain hopeful, you know, that she will still be found. I just want her family to know that our thoughts are with them and her mother.

A few weeks ago, I also had the opportunity to attend the Yukon Chamber of Commerce annual general meeting, which was held in Watson Lake. Over the course of the two days that I was there, I listened to various communities. I remember Dawson City and Watson Lake chambers were there and they discussed their business environments and they also had an opportunity to hear from representatives of the government's Department of Justice, the Department of Education, the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, the climate change centre, and the Government of Canada's supply and service



department. It was interesting and it is valuable to listen to those meetings -- to what those communities have to say. I was there, also, and I'd like to again extend my congratulations to Sherwood Copper -- and Ian Ludgate was there -- on their recent business successes with Sherwood Copper and the award that they won at the chamber. I'd like to thank the chamber for the invitation to attend their meeting.

Mr. Speaker, in the Budget Address last spring, I commented on a number of the areas that I'm responsible for -- and I won't go into all of those this time. What I intend to do is to try to prioritize my comments and limit the discussion to my critic areas as much as possible; however, some of my colleagues have asked me to raise a number of other issues in my portfolios as well.

My analysis of the supplementary budget is that, when you think about it, you have to consider this government's past performance and its ability to effectively complete new initiatives that they propose in a competent manner -- basically, on time, on budget. We can talk about that a little bit as we get into this. The government's performance on that front is not very good. Their performance on a number of other legislative areas doesn't appear to be moving forward very well either.

There is the still-unreleased education reform report. There is the government's lack of attention to review and make modern the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, which has been promised, and the lack of attention this fall to amendments to the *Yukon Workers' Compensation Act*. We will talk about those later in this session.

The one item that I think needs to be focused on is what we find in this supplementary budget, an almost \$100-million surplus and basically no progress on things like affordable housing and safe shelter and accommodation for those who are most in need.

Five years ago the Premier spoke about a spending trajectory that he claimed was not sustainable. It is apparent that we are seeing the same financial management that all Canadians are now aware of at the federal level -- continued cuts. There are a whole bunch of promises out there that are never fulfilled -- basically, projects that don't get completed. There are continued cuts and reductions in services that have created huge surpluses and weren't even predicted when the budgets were drafted. The large sums of money are lapsed because projects aren't finished on time, which is what I was saying earlier.

That's basically due to poor planning on this government's part and poor construction management strategies that they've used. It's this government's fingers-in approach that has contributed to the failure of many initiatives as they disregarded professionals in the public service who are hired to complete these projects on time and on budget.

I guess the question is: how long -- you know, it's five years of Yukon Party government -- are Yukoners expected to shrug off the delays and cost overruns of projects, such as the Carmacks school, the Watson Lake Health Centre, the athletes village, and projects like that? Taxpayers' dollars are being expended, the projects aren't being finished on time and they are way overbudget.

So, as October comes to an end and now we're into November -- I've wanted to deliver this speech for a number of days. I've had to update it because the government didn't really want to talk about the budget and they put a whole bunch of other things in front of us, so I didn't quite get all of my time frames changed.

But it is November, and just the other day I was listening to the Minister of Health and Social Services promise a last-minute solution -- he was promising to announce something soon, within the next few weeks, to provide a plan for youth-at-risk sleeping on our streets. I heard the minister say that he has been working for the past couple of months on this project and that we're going to hear soon about the positive results of this plan.

I sincerely hope that it's more than a plan. I hope we're talking about beds in safe rooms. I'm going to remain optimistic about that.

The minister made that announcement here in the Legislature, but what prevented him from making that announcement at the last meeting of the Premier's community tour? What prevented him from making that announcement on the Thursday night meeting with the youth who were asking the question: when will there be an emergency youth shelter? He didn't make that announcement then. When those young people were on the street on the Friday evening urging the government to take some action on this, he didn't go tell them then. He waited until he was here in the Legislative Assembly to tell us. He needs to tell those young people what it is he is doing, because I think that's important. I hope that he takes into consideration all the recommendations that he's receiving, including those from the youth coalition who were working really hard on this issue. I don't understand why he would be so quick to dismiss that hard work and the work that they've done in that area, on that matter.

The other minister who has shortcomings in providing deliverables when it comes to housing would be -- or at least equal to the Minister of Health and Social Services -- the minister responsible for Yukon Housing Corporation. There has been just about zero progress on real, affordable housing. We heard the minister the other day talk about the \$30 million used to construct the family residences and the seniors housing at Yukon College. There are people who are in real need, and there has been zero progress made for those people -- single parents who are trying to provide a safe place for their children. There are literally hundreds of young parents still looking for places to live.

The federal government provided money for affordable housing for Falcon Ridge and projects like Falcon Ridge, and some of that money was used at the athletes village. There are people out there who are in desperate need of affordable housing. The federal government has also recently provided more money -- in the neighbourhood of \$50 million -- for affordable housing. Some of that money has been directed to First Nations to address the needs in their communities. I believe it's somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$17 million that remains with this government for affordable housing initiatives.

I hope that the Premier and the minister responsible don't play games with words any more -- a game that involves pretending there is a difference between the terms "affordable" and "social" housing to those who just want a home with rent they can afford. The government can keep insisting that there is not a problem but there are many Yukoners out there for whom the rents continue to go up, and Yukoners are having trouble making ends meet.

I am waiting to hear more. It's not in this supplementary budget, but maybe the minister will be able to tell us some of the plans that he has for that.

I am not sure which ministers would like to share the responsibility for the incomplete health care facility in Watson Lake, which I visited two or three weeks ago. After the third summer of construction, this building is still not closed to the weather. I look across the street -- the Premier can look right outside his window, and I just wonder how impressed he is at the local contractors. It was only a few months ago that that was a barren lot with no excavation, and now we are seeing the third story actually complete on that project.

Is the Premier wondering why his constituents are still without services in their community -- which that multi-level health care facility should be providing in the community? I wonder if the Premier is aware of the need for a new ambulance services structure -- a new building to house the ambulances in his community?

We talked earlier today about the receiving home -- there is no money in this budget for dealing with the replacement of the receiving home. There is no money for dealing with shelter for supported living for adults with FASD. And there is no money in this budget to deal with black mould problems in houses and public buildings across this territory.

I did have an opportunity this summer to spend time with the residents of Marsh Lake. I was able to volunteer. I was also invited to see a number of the homes, and others invited me to see areas where they were concerned about the potential for banks being eroded. I'm hoping there is money in this supplementary budget to analyze what work was done this summer on the flood, so we can learn and respond more efficiently, and that there will be sufficient planning to relieve the stresses that residents of Southern Lakes and Upper Liard areas may expect in upcoming seasons.

There is the correctional facility; there's Hamilton Boulevard -- I'd like to propose that maybe the surplus could be impacted more positively at some point in the future. I'd like to maybe applaud the City of Whitehorse for its foresight in investigating the possibilities of geothermal energy potential. And I would urge the government to consider supporting a pilot project to investigate this further and maybe enter into partnerships with First Nations and others to investigate those potentials.

I would also hope that the government used its time well this morning in its meeting with Minister Strahl by demonstrating our government's commitment to assist the Council of Yukon First Nations in their urgent need for a new administration building and persuading the Government of Canada to act responsibly in this area. This initiative cannot be delayed any

longer, as it remains an embarrassment for all Yukoners that the Council of Yukon First Nations government remains housed in an old residential school that is slated to be torn down.

I am sure that initiatives such as this would lead to a more positive and productive working relationship between this government and Yukon First Nations. It's a matter of needed infrastructure to provide effective services for their citizens.

I realize I am out of time. I did have more to say, but I look forward to examining the budget further during Committee of the Whole.

Thank you.

**Hon. Ms. Horne:** As I was outlining in my comments previously, this budget is part of a larger package that reflects our clear vision for a bright future for the Yukon. In preparing for this discussion, I was reminded of the importance of the second reading of a bill. It is the most important stage through which the bill is required to pass, for its whole principle is then at issue and is affirmed or denied by a vote of the House. Thus, Mr. Speaker, I think it is vital that we should think about this and discuss the vision, the principles that stand behind this budget.

When I imagine tomorrow, I see a place where offenders get the help they need in a facility that is designed with programming and treatment in mind.

During our first mandate, we conducted thorough, meaningful consultations that resulted in the substance abuse action plan and the correctional redevelopment strategic plan. What we are doing this mandate is a result of that consultation. The Yukon requires a modern correctional centre that will allow correction professionals to carry out their responsibilities in a positive environment that will support the provision of programs to offenders.

This government realizes the importance that the centre will play in ensuring safety and security for all Yukoners.

Mr. Speaker, this government was not content to build a warehouse. We were not content to build the facility that was proposed by the Liberal government. As we discussed, when I took the opposition critics on a tour of Whitehorse Correctional Centre, the way we do corrections needs to change. That is why, Mr. Speaker, this government undertook an extensive consultation on corrections, because we know that the building is only part of the story. To make meaningful change in offenders' lives and provide security for Yukoners, we need to change the correctional system as a whole.

Mr. Speaker, our government's philosophy on correctional reform is summed up best in the correctional redevelopment strategic plan. In order to achieve a vision of becoming the best correctional system in Canada, the Department of Justice is committed to working collaboratively with First Nations and other service providers to achieve the following goals: to substantially improve the quality of correctional programs offered to victims, offenders and community members; to fundamentally change the operation of the correctional system so that the Department of Justice, First Nations and other service providers are better positioned to participate in the delivery of high-

quality correctional programs. We are aware of the central role that new correctional centre will play in delivering high-quality correctional programming.

Yukon has accepted the recommendation of the building advisory committee. The new correctional facility will allow for flexible programming, separate remand facilities, and it will promote a healing environment that reflects Yukon First Nation culture and values.

The new centre will be a modern, secure facility that provides security, but also offers offenders real opportunities to heal and take responsibility for their actions. This allows us to design a facility where staff work directly with the offenders and which will facilitate the delivery of high-quality correctional programming.

The act will also reflect the principle of the corrections action plan, which was completed in 2006 and will enable the government to manage and deliver programs and services based on those principles. Changes must be made to support a client-focused correctional system that aims to promote healing, accountability and offenders taking responsibility. We are already taking steps to move forward in this area. Offenders who are willing to participate may be eligible for a comprehensive treatment plan that includes court-supervised substance abuse treatment, random drug testing, incentives and sanctions, clinical case management and social service support. We are committed to helping those who wish to participate in improving their lives.

The Community Wellness Court will evolve and adapt over time through regular community input from local non-government organizations, First Nations and service providers. Our focus is on bringing health, hope and healing. During our consultation on corrections, Yukoners said that the correctional system must be based on healing. Mr. Speaker, we have a clear vision for a bright future in the Justice department.

Thank you.

**Mr. McRobb:** I was expecting the Premier to close debate, but due to popular demand from the other side to hear what I have to say, I will talk for a little while on this budget. It is a supplementary budget, of course, and I have 20 minutes. I will try to cover a few different areas. I want to talk about the Kluane riding and make some general comments, as well as respond to a few issues in my critic areas.

Firstly, on the Kluane area, as you are aware, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion it is the most beautiful region in the world. It has a large geographical area extending from just west of the Whitehorse city boundary all the way to the Alaska border, on both the Alaska Highway and the Haines road. The riding includes about a dozen communities, an elected municipal government in Haines Junction, and three First Nations -- two are self-governing.

Kluane has some of the largest and most beautiful lakes on the planet and, for the benefit of the Member for Lake Laberge, possibly the entire universe. Kluane also has the highest mountain in Canada, the most glaciers -- probably the only rapidly receding glacier, as well -- abundant wildlife populations that

include ungulates such as Dall sheep, bison, elk, deer, caribou and moose.

With such a diversity of factors to consider come just as many issues, and many need to be addressed. There are issues that relate to this region just like other regions in the territory. There are issues specific to each community in the region. There are issues specific to each First Nation and municipal government, and there are issues that pertain to areas outside of these communities.

Let's quickly review these categories, beginning with issues common to our territory. As several speakers before me have mentioned, there is a need for affordable housing and seniors care facilities. There is need for a new residential lot development -- especially in Destruction Bay, I might point out, because I'm reminded every time I'm there. This is something I've been putting on the record for several years now. Unfortunately this government has chosen not to respond, so hopefully we'll see something in the spring budget.

There is a need to increase social assistance rates for the less fortunate in our society. More tradespeople are needed in our communities. I fully recognize that this is becoming a global issue; however, the Yukon government can certainly take measures to provide incentives to attract qualified tradespeople, especially to our communities. That's why I'm mentioning it today.

There is a need for alcohol and drug treatment programs, and, of course, there is always a need for more community development funds in the communities.

There is a need to fund cultural centres and visitor reception centres. On the last point, I believe the Minister of Tourism made an undertaking at the October 4 meeting in Haines Junction to construct a new visitor reception centre in Haines Junction. So we'll be looking for that in the spring budget.

There is a need to ensure there is a sufficient supply of health care professionals. There have been several retirements recently in the nursing stations on the north Alaska Highway.

There is a need for more health-related programming to deal with scourges such as diabetes and alcohol abuse.

Those are some of the general issues that apply across the territory and certainly to the riding.

There are also issues common to the whole Kluane region. One of them is the need for a post-Shakwak economy. Mr. Speaker, essentially there is only a few years of bridge work left in this one-half a billion dollar U.S. international project that has spanned over four decades now. The Shakwak project was paid for by the U.S. taxpayers. It soon will be expiring and there is a need to fill that huge void.

Each of the several communities has a list of needs and concerns, and I'll just identify a couple of them at this time. Haines Junction has recently completed its economic development plan, which is something I mentioned in the spring sitting. One of the priorities is to encourage decentralization of a government branch, for instance, to the community. This met with widespread support in Haines Junction, and that is why it is included in the plan. I'm hoping to hear something positive from the government toward addressing that goal.

In Burwash Landing, there is the Kluane First Nation youth and elders activity centre. That item is mentioned in the supplementary budget, and it was mentioned in last spring's budget and in the budget the year before. We've seen it in three budgets now, and we're still not sure if that building is going to get completed. I recall the press release sent out from the Yukon Party government last spring, and quite a few of the facts in that release were wrong.

Finally, there are issues outside of community boundaries and one of them is the condition of the Alaska Highway, especially with respect to the road section from the Duke River bridge to the Alaska border. Anybody who has travelled that section will probably compare it to a rollercoaster ride. The highway has suffered considerable permafrost damage and even though that highway was reconstructed to modern highway standards in the past 10 years, it is in abysmal condition.

We heard about some permafrost scientific testing work that was going to be done this summer, but we haven't heard about any of the results from the minister yet. One result I heard through the grapevine is that in some areas stumpage has been in the magnitude between one metre and three metres. That presents a rather dangerous situation when it poses a likelihood of air gaps in the foundation bed for the road that could cave in at any time, among other concerns.

There are wildlife issues. For instance, the tick infestation of the elk herds that has received media attention of late is a serious concern that has to be dealt with. There is the overpopulation of the bison herd -- another issue that has to be dealt with that we haven't heard anything from the government on. There is the removal of the no-hunting corridor along the north Alaska Highway. This was something the renewable resource council addressed a few years ago and something my predecessor, Mr. Brewster, promised would be removed following the Shakwak reconstruction. Well, that reconstruction in that zone was completed years ago. So, again, it's another wildlife issue we've heard nothing about from this government.

Finally, there is the need to do wildlife census population studies on time to ensure proper wildlife management. This was an issue years ago, and failing to uphold this requirement caused a very controversial and unfortunate million-dollar exercise -- the government referred to it as the caribou enhancement project but detractors referred to it as the wolf-kill program or the big helicopter gunship exercise, depending on who you talk to.

I want to mention some of the wonderful events I attended in the riding since we last sat. One of the first was the Governor General's tour back in June. She flew into the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations' village of Klukshu to great fanfare. We had a lunch prepared for her, and it was interesting to sit next to the Governor General and watch her eat with a plastic knife and fork. I couldn't help but wonder what the protocol officials in the Yukon government would think of that.

Klukshu has been selected by other notable celebrities in recent times, including Hillary Clinton, who visited there only two years ago. Most of the political forecasters in the United States are currently favouring her to become president in their election in about one year's time.

There is the Kluane Mountain Bluegrass Festival in early June, held simultaneously with the Alsek Music Festival. Both were very well-attended. Again, this year, the bluegrass festival, which is held in the Haines Junction convention centre, was sold out. Kudos to the organizers of both those events.

The Kluane Chilkat International Bike Relay is another very popular event that attracted about 1,300 participants again this year. There was the Southern Tutchone gathering held at Duke Meadow near Burwash Landing, which attracted hundreds of people. There were general assemblies held by the Kluane First Nation near Burwash Landing, and by the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations at Kathleen Lake. Both of those events were very well-attended.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in Haines Junction, in early September, as you know, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held a conference that attracted MLAs from across the country, as well as legislative staff. One of the highlights of that conference for me was responding to a request by the Speaker of the B.C. Legislature, who spent some time looking for a pair of baby moccasins for his granddaughter-to-be. Having had no luck finding a pair, he approached me. I subsequently went to one of the most prominent elders in the community and made the request to her. Thankfully, she was able to hand-make a pair of baby moccasins that day. You should have seen the expression on their faces -- the Speaker and his wife were visibly thrilled to have these moccasins. I would thank elder Marge Jackson for her contribution to that.

So, those are some of the events that took place over the summer. If anyone listening or reading *Hansard*, as the case may be, would care to attend any of these events that are held on an annual basis, then I would encourage you to do so and to take in some of the other sights or hikes -- many that are opportunities presented in this beautiful part of our territory.

I realize I only have about four minutes left, Mr. Speaker, so I'll be brief.

In general on the supplementary budget, it has been pointed out -- and I'll reiterate -- the \$100-million surplus needs to be addressed.

There are several needs in the territory, some of which have already been mentioned, such as affordable housing, an increase to social assistance rates, the need for the youth centre, and the list goes on. These social issues need to be addressed and there is no excuse for all of us in here not using some of that surplus appropriately to address those issues. Just on this point, Mr. Speaker, out of all of the Yukon Party budgets tabled so far in this Legislature since 2002, the gross amount exceeds \$5 billion, yet there hasn't been one penny to raise social assistance rates in our territory. That is absolutely disgraceful.

The government also needs to have some flame brought to its toes on all these projects that aren't finished on time. The previous speaker from Mount Lorne pointed this out, and it is also a concern to me -- especially following up on the Auditor General's report from earlier this year.

Undone business such as the *Children's Act* review, the *Workers' Compensation Act*, the education reform process -- there are countless pieces of legislation that we have yet to deal

with that seem to be eternally pushed away from the Order Paper. Let's deal with them.

Finally, in the critic area of Highways and Public Works, there are several highway concerns in the territory, both in operation and maintenance and in capital. There are some issues regarding airports. One of them is -- I'll just put it up there on the radar screen again for the government -- why don't we do something to compensate these volunteers for NavCan, who are on standby 24 hours a day in our communities? I'm sure they know what I'm talking about. Let's do something about it.

There are issues with respect to government buildings, such as mould, space, cost overruns and so on. There are communications-related issues, such as the politicization in the selection of the cellphone towers by excluding Ixex Valley and some other areas in the territory.

In the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources there should be funds to assist the geothermal project in Whitehorse and, in fact, across the territory. This is something I mentioned in the climate change motion that occurred last spring. District heating is needed in several communities through some excellent projects out there that could happen, if it got the attention of this government.

There are land development issues -- all over the place. And where's this energy policy that we heard the minister announce? We've heard nothing about it.

And, of course, there are issues related to the Yukon Energy Corporation and Yukon Development Corporation, and we'll be dealing with the presence of the president and CEO.

**Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** It's a pleasure to stand here in the Assembly and rise in support of Bill No. 8, *Second Appropriation Act, 2007-08*. It's disappointing to hear the negativity coming from members opposite, the lack of engagement in debate on the issues. We all recognize it's the job of opposition to provide contrary views and suggestions, but there is no rule that suggests they can't do so in a constructive manner. We see the members reflecting on things in a manner that really is very ill-focused on actually achieving constructive debate. Particularly in following the Member for Kluane in debate, I have to point out that the member references the *Children's Act* project. The member knows full well from previous debate in this Assembly that this government did something that no previous government in the territory would do. We involved First Nations in a partnership in developing this legislation, both in consulting with Yukoners and in working on the policy elements and now, currently, in jointly forming the legal drafting.

The members can't have it both ways. They stand up here repeatedly and accuse the government of not consulting. Then they stand up and accuse us of consulting too much. Now, it's pretty clear to anyone who is listening that no matter what the government does, it will either be too much or not enough, according to the Official Opposition. However, what really matters here is the effect on Yukoners -- how are Yukoners affected?

Yukoners today have the opportunity to be involved in significant pieces of legislation. First Nation citizens, as represented by their governments and projects such as the *Children's Act* review, correctional reform and the education reform project, have the opportunity to be involved in addressing issues that they had significant concerns about -- issues where their citizens felt they were not having their interests considered and addressed.

We took the step of involving them in the processes of public government and giving them the opportunity to work in partnership in those areas. This is an example of a success that we have continued.

The *Children's Act* project is moving forward. We will be doing consultation beginning this month on the legal draft with targeted consultation with stakeholders who provided input, and we look forward to their input from that. This is yet another example of how this government is engaging in full involvement with First Nations and the stakeholders who provided their input to this important piece of legislation. We are committed to doing it right, not doing it quickly. We are going to get it right in the end.

Another area where the members can't have it both ways: the members of both parties have stood up and suggested that the trajectory of spending was too high. Then, the next time they get up, they suggest that the government ought to be spending the fiscal surplus. Again, the members can't have it both ways. The trajectory of spending going up and the surplus -- you are either going to spend more or you are going to spend less. They really need to make up their minds.

This government, instead, is working with Yukoners. We are working with the officials. We are working on assessing the needs in areas and in investing and taking what we believe is the appropriate action based on work with departments and listening to the Yukon public through steps such as the fall community tour.

As members know, I have regular public meetings and all MLAs on this side of the Assembly communicate with constituents through other means, such as e-mail, meetings and other steps of keeping in regular contact with their constituents. We listen to Yukoners. We take the appropriate action in addressing their needs.

I'd now like to move on to the real issue at hand, which is the budget and the steps that have been taken through this fiscal year and those that will be taken through this budget, when it moves forward, to address the interests and the priorities of Yukoners.

I'd like to begin by expressing thanks to my colleagues for some of the changes that have been made in this year and some of the investments that address the needs of my constituents. I appreciate the resurfacing work that was done on the Mayo Road -- or the North Klondike Highway, as it's formally known -- this summer. The significant stretch of asphalt that was put in addresses an issue that had been raised with me many, many times by constituents on the quality of that road. Of course, for my constituents, a great many of them commute to work on a daily basis or travel the highway regularly. So having solid infrastructure and good roads is of significant importance to

them. I thank the Minister of Highways and Public Works for that investment this summer and thank the department and contractors for the job they've done in that area.

As well, another area that I would like to again thank the same minister for, in his role as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, is the *Subdivision Act*, which implements the changes put in under the 2006 agriculture policy. This, of course, was of great importance to my constituents, as the majority of the farmers in the Yukon are in the riding of Lake Laberge and many of them were involved in the development of that policy, which is key to developing the Yukon agriculture industry to be sustainable and support the Yukon's needs to a greater extent. Of course, this is a far greener, far more environmentally friendly solution to serving Yukon's food needs than shipping our food up the highway from southern locations.

Another area that the Member for Kluane referenced, attempting to spin it in a negative light, was the situation of cell service. This government is proud of the investment that we have put into expanding cell service to Yukon communities.

Of course, the member ought to be aware that we have committed to further expanding the cellular phone service. I appreciate the commitment that the Minister of Highways and Public Works has made to expand the cell service into the Ibex Valley area. He has indicated that he expects that to be done in the next construction season. I appreciate the continued work in that area to further address the interest of my constituents by expanding cell service to people in the Ibex Valley, as well as the work that has already transpired in improving cell service to people in the Mayo Road area.

#### **Motion to adjourn debate**

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** Mr. Speaker, seeing the time, I move that debate be now adjourned.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Member for Lake Laberge that debate be now adjourned.

*Motion to adjourn debate on second reading of Bill No. 8 agreed to*

**Hon. Mr. Cathers:** I move that the House do now adjourn.

**Speaker:** It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the House do now adjourn.

*Motion agreed to*

**Speaker:** This House now stands adjourned until 1:00 p.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 5:29 p.m.*